

REMNANTS AND RENEWAL:

**A HISTORY OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH
KOREA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ISSUES OF CHURCH
AND STATE, 1945-1994**

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**A THESIS PRESENTED TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been presented to any other academic institution other than the University of Edinburgh, to which it is submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself, and is a result of my own research.

JOOSEOP KEUM
DECEMBER 2000

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to give a comprehensive account of the development of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with special reference to issues of church and state. The development of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a whole is deeply connected to these issues. This is particularly the case in North Korea where Christianity since 1945 has existed within a Communist state. The particularities of culture, religious tradition, temperament and socio-historical experience will be studied in relation to the socio-political stance of North Korean Protestantism.

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part traces the history of northern Protestantism before the partition of 1945. The main argument in this part is that the northern *minjung*, who had a strong antipathy to the southern-centered political power and the discriminatory social structure of the *Chosun* Dynasty, accepted Protestant Christianity as an alternative religion which could provide a new hope for social equality. During the period of Japanese colonialism, northern Protestantism resisted Japanese rule and organized the March First Independence Movement and opposition to *Shinto* Shrine worship. The thesis demonstrates that Protestant engagement with the socio-political context of the northern *minjung* was the major factor in the growth of Christianity in the North. A *minjung*-centered opposition paradigm in church-state relations was developed through this engagement.

Part Two examines the history of North Korean Christianity during the time of its ideological struggle with Communism. This covers the period from the establishment of the Communist regime in 1945, through the Korean War and into the post-war period. It will be shown that after the liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the northern churches mainly repeated the paradigm of opposition and competed for political power with the Communists, on the understanding that Christianity could not coexist with an atheistic regime. On the other hand, a cooperation paradigm also emerged through the leaders of the North Korean Christian Association, which recognized that the reforms initiated by the Communists were necessary in North Korea. It will be argued that both paradigms, the one cooperating with the regime and the other opposed to it, failed because neither of them was genuinely based on the context of the northern *minjung*. During the Korean War, the majority of northern Christians supported the Allied Army and continued to resist the Communist regime in the post-war context. This resistance brought about the "Anti-Religious Campaign" of the Communists. The result was that Christianity in North Korea suffered severe losses religious life from 1958 to 1972, and the number of Christians was greatly diminished.

Part Three examines the revival of northern Protestantism since 1972, after the winter of the Anti-Religious Campaign. The remnant Christians reopened house churches and a seminary, and established the Korean Christian Federation as their national ecclesiastical structure. Institutionally revived northern Protestantism also sought to renew its theological and diaconal identities. It will be argued during this period that Protestant Christianity undertook authentic renewal of its mission in the Communist context. This renewal emphasized the notion of the church being a church for the *minjung* through the development of dialogue between Christianity and *Juche* Idea and the Social *Diakonia* Mission. The church-state relations in this period will be described and analyzed as a *minjung*-centered cooperation paradigm. With a summary and assessment of the various historical paradigms of the church-state relations in North Korea, the thesis concludes that the revival and renewal of northern Protestantism was not a compromise with the Communist government; rather, it was an effective articulation of a *minjung*-centered approach to church-state relations in the Communist context.

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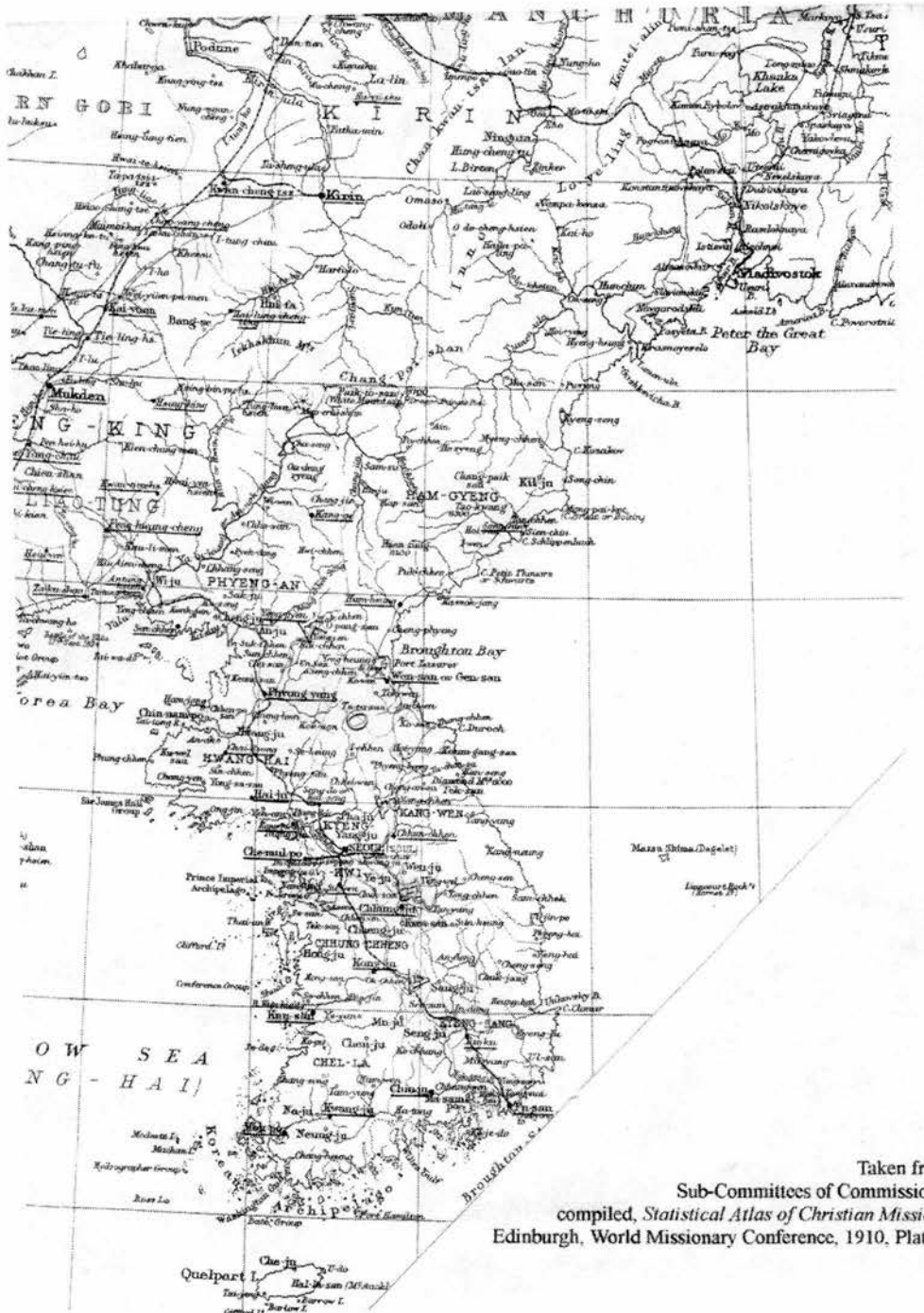
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Action by Churches Together
ACPC	Asian Christian Peace Conference
BDCM	G. H. Anderson ed., <i>Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions</i> , New York, Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCC	China Christian Council
CCIA	Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
CDA	Christian Democracy Alliance
CIM	China Inland Mission
CLS	Christian Literature Society in Korea
CPC	Christian Peace Conference
CPRP	Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland
DFRF	Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland
DNUF	Democratic National United Front
EKD	<i>Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland</i>
FCC	Federal Council of Churches in the USA
FPJP	Five Province Joint Presbytery
IKCH	Institute for Korean Church History
IMC	International Missionary Council
IRM	International Review of Mission
IBMR	International Bulletin of Missionary Research
JCGIK	Japanese Colonial Government in Korea
KCF	Korean Christian Federation
KPG	Korean Provisional Government
KPR	Korean People's Republic
KWP	Korean Worker's Party
Kyodan	The United Christ Church in Japan
LMS	London Missionary Society
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MFIM	March First Independence Movement
NCCCUSA	National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
NCKK	National Council of Churches in Korea
NKCA	North Korean Christian Association
North Korea	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Northern Korea	The Northern Region of Korean Peninsula before 1945
PCK	Presbyterian Church of Korea
PCK-Hapdong	Presbyterian Church of Korea-Hapdong
PCUSA	Presbyterian Church (USA)
SDGA	South Division General Assembly
South Korea	Republic of Korea
Southern Korea	The Southern Region of Korean Peninsula before 1945
SPA	Supreme People's Assembly
TSPM	Three Self Patriotic Movement
UN	United Nations
UNCOK	United Nations Commission on Korea
USAMGIK	United States of America Military Government in Korea
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches

MAPS

MAP 1) GENERAL MAP OF KOREA AND MANCHURIA IN THE LATE CHOSUN ERA ¹



Taken from:
Sub-Committees of Commission I,
compiled, *Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions*,
Edinburgh, World Missionary Conference, 1910, Plate 9.

¹ For the place-names during the early Protestant mission period before 1910, see this map.

MAP 2) MAP OF KOREA IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES ²



Taken from: B. Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*,
New York, W. W. Norton, 1997, 145

² This map shows the traditional boundaries of provinces before the establishment of two Koreas.

MAP 3) MAP OF ALLOCATION OF TERRITORY AMONG MAJOR PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN KOREA ³



Taken from: Clark, A. D., *A history of the Church in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1971, 8

³ This map shows the allocation of territory among the western mission boards in Korea. This allocation also influenced the theological characteristics of each provincial church.

MAP 4) MAP SHOWING THE DIVISION OF KOREA AFTER THE PARTITION OF 1945 AND AFTER THE END OF THE KOREAN WAR IN 1953

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Taken from: B. Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*,
New York, W. W. Norton, 1997, 18

⁴ This map shows the partition line, the 38th parallel, of the Korean peninsula from 1945-1950 and the ceasefire line after the Korean War in 1953 which is the current division line between North and South Korea.

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REMNANTS AND RENEWAL:
A HISTORY OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH KOREA, WITH
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INTRODUCTION

The issue of church and state takes us to the heart of mission because the Gospel is the good news in every part of human life and society. Throughout the history of the Church in Korea, the issues of church and state, religion and society have been deeply connected to the development of the Korean churches. Indeed, an important factor in Christianity's success in Korea has been its frequent identification with political movements promoting Korean nationalism, independence, democracy, and Korean reunification. Especially in Northern Korea before the division of the peninsula in 1945, and in North Korea after it,¹ the church-state relationship has been one of the crucial issues determining the fate of the churches.

Before the partition of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the majority of Christians in Korea lived in Northern Korea. Pyongyang, the capital city of North Korea, was referred to as the "Jerusalem of East Asia" by missionaries,² indicating that Northern Korea was the vibrant center of, in particular, Protestant Christianity.³ In contrast, however, the Protestant church in North Korea was officially closed down, and virtually ceased to exist from 1958 to 1972. After the partition in 1945, the Protestant Christians in North

¹ The terms 'Northern Korea' and 'Southern Korea' will be used as shortened names for 'the northern region of the Korean peninsula' (*Whanghae, Pyongan, and Hamkyung* province) and 'the southern region of the Korean peninsula' (*Kyungsang, Chulla, Kyungki, Choongchung and Kangwon* province) before the partition in 1945. The terms 'North Korea' and 'South Korea' will be used where appropriate in place of the official names, 'Democratic People's Republic of Korea' and 'Republic of Korea,' for the period after 1945.

² A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1971, 159

³ About 65% of the total number of Protestant Christians in Korea prior to 1945 was in the northern part. In the Presbyterian church, the majority of the Korean Church, the figure was even higher, at 75%. These percentages are based on statistics given for Korean Christianity in the years 1941-1942 by the Institute for Korean Church History (IKCH). See, IKCH ed., *Hankuk Kidokyo eui Yoksa* (A History of Christianity in Korea), vol. 2, Seoul, Kyomunsa, 1990, 261, which indicates that 223,339 of 351,222 Protestant Christians in Korea were in the northern part, and that, within that figure there was a total of 256,575 Presbyterians, of whom

Korea collided with the Communist regime in a brief competition for political hegemony.⁴ This collision resulted in the persecution of Christianity in North Korea, and most Christians evacuated to South Korea during the Korean War. There were only about 50,000 ‘remnant’ Protestant Christians and about 20 ordained ministers left behind the Iron Curtain after the war.⁵ There is some evidence that these remnant Christians in North Korea continued in conflict with the Communist government even in the post-war context.⁶ Because of this conflict, the Communists did not allow any religious freedom for the Christians from 1958 to 1972, during which they operated a hostile religious policy known as the “Anti-Religious Campaign.”⁷

In 1972, the North Korean government lifted its ban on Christianity and the Protestant church in North Korea started to revive. Instead of entering into conflict with the government, the North Korean church now worked within its Communist context. Old churches reopened, new churches were built, the theological seminary reopened for ministry training, and the Bible and hymnbook were again printed. Christianity, which had been considered as “anti-revolutionary social opium,”⁸ was re-evaluated as “a partner of the reconstruction of socialist fatherland and the reunification of Korean peninsula”⁹ by the Korean Worker’s Party (KWP). This change in the state’s understanding of Christianity brought widened religious freedom allowing worship,

191,254 were in the northern part.

⁴ See, S. Masahiko, “Christianity in North Korea after the Liberation, 1945-1950”, in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Haebang hu Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of the North Korean Church since 1945), Seoul, Dasan Kulbang, 1992, 36-40.

⁵ Rev. Ki-jun Koh, the former general secretary of KCF, reported these statistics to the WCC delegation. See, E. Weingartner, “Confidential Report: CCIA/WCC Delegation to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, 9-16 November 1987.” In South Korea, In-chul Kang claims that about 120,000-170,000 Christians evacuated to the South during the war. In-chul Kang, “A Recognition of Modern Religious History in North Korea”, in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Ibid.*, 1992, 172-173.

⁶ See, S. Masahiko “Christianity and North Korean Society after Liberation”, in Samuel Lee ed., *Pyunghwa Toil Yonku Moin Jaryojip* (The Proceedings of Colloquium on Peace and Reunification in Korea), vol.1, Seoul, Sungsil University Press, 1987, 20-42.

⁷ See, Ha-chul Chung, *Urinun Woai Jongkyo rul Bandae Hanunga?*, (Why Do We Oppose Religion?), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1959.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹ Sung-duk Park, “A New Perspective of the *Juche* Idea on Christianity” in The Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America ed., *Christian Faith and Juche Philosophy*, Seoul, Sinang kwa Jisung Sa, 1993, 86.

Eucharist, baptism and restricted church planting.

1. Necessity for Research

In spite of this revival of the Protestant church in North Korea, the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea has been little known to the outside world. Church historians in South Korea justified their lack of attention to the North Korean church in various ways. Some of them emphasized the difficulties and limitations of undertaking historical studies of North Korean Christianity. These were enumerated as 1) the oppression of the former military government and its negative effects on North Korean study; 2) the conservative resistance among South Korean churches against research on North Korean Christianity; and 3) the difficulty of accessing the primary sources on North Korean Christianity.¹⁰

Nevertheless, in South Korea there have been marvelous achievements in other fields of North Korean studies. Scholars of North Korean studies in the fields of sociology, Korean literature, Korean history, politics and economics have all continued independently, in spite of the “government-controlled Cold War ideology.”¹¹ The absence of theological studies on North Korea is the more evident in view of continued research in the other fields. There were 138 PhD theses on North Korean studies in South Korean universities from 1970 to 1998, but not a single one of these was in the field of religion.

Table 1) Distribution of PhD Theses on North Korean Studies in South Korea, 1970-1998

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Field	PL	IR	EC	ML	SC	RU	LW	AD	ED	KW	OT	RL
Theses No.	37	16	14	11	7	12	10	10	12	5	5	0

¹⁰ Seong-Min Ryu, “A Study of Religion in North Korea”, in Society of North Korean Studies ed. *Bundan Banseki Bukhan Yeongusa*, (A History of North Korean Studies during the Half Century of Division), Seoul, Hanul, 1999, 483.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹² The list of theses is from Seong-Yun Kang, “The Situation and Tasks of North Korean Studies” in *Ibid.*, 19-24.

PL: Politics, IR: International Relations, EC: Economics, ML: Military, SC: Sociology, RU: Reunification, LW: Law, AD: Administration, ED: Education, KW: Korean War, OT: Others, RL: Religion

The excuses of the church historians in South Korea are not sufficient to explain the gap in achievement between theology and other fields, because scholars in other fields were faced with similar limitations.

Besides these external limitations there were also internal ones. Most historians focused their questions on whether or not the revival of Protestant churches in North Korea was a simply matter of political propaganda. Their attitude was colored by anti-Communism in the Cold War context. It was very difficult to arrive at an objective academic statement or a new insight within the context of the South Korean churches at that time. However, the situation has now changed and the democratic government in South Korea has allowed free research on North Korea, and it is therefore necessary that we research Protestant Christianity in North Korea from a new and properly academic perspective.

2. Rationale of Research

2.1 Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to offer an interpretation of the history of the North Korean Christians' response to their Communist context. In order to discover the true nature of this response, we will have to analyze in depth the church-state relations in North Korea.

The church-state relationship, it must be emphasized, is the starting point of the criticisms launched by Christians from the South against the North Korean Church. It is also a crucial actor in both the disappearance and, later, the revival of the Protestant church in North Korea. By focusing on the church-state relationship, the thesis will pursue two core questions, and several sub-questions, as follows:

- Core Question: How can we understand and interpret the experience of Protestant Christianity in North Korea in regard to the issues of church-state relations? And

what are the historical paradigms and missiological implications of the church-state relations practiced by northern Protestantism,¹³ in its context?

- Sub-questions:

- What was the socio-historical background of the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea? What were the internal changes affecting this revival? What were the external influences affecting it?
- What has been the relationship between Christianity and Communism in North Korea?
- What activities have the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) and the house churches carried on since the revival? Were their activities mere political propaganda, or real religious activities?
- How do North Korean Christians understand their own identity in their Communist context?
- How has the North Korean church understood Christian mission in her context?
- Does a scientific study of the Protestant church in North Korea produce a new understanding of her role within Korean church history as a whole? What new light does its experience shed on Christian socialism, Christianity and nationalism, the ideological interface with Communism and church-state relationship issues in Korea?

2.2 The Argument of Thesis

This study will attempt to show that the revival of the Protestant Christianity in North Korea was not the result of a compromising accommodation with the Communist government, but the consequence of its effective articulation of a *minjung*-centered approach to the church-state relationship in the Communist context.

- It will be argued that the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea was due to sustained efforts by the North Korean Christians to articulate their Christian

¹³ 'Northern Protestantism' means Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea prior to the

identity within the Communist context.

- It will be argued that the KCF's self identity included a specific understanding of Christian witness in relation to the *Juche* ideology of the KWP.
- It will be argued that the theological foundation of North Korean Christianity, and its missiological identity, lay in its continuing adherence to the *minjung*-centered tradition of Korean Protestant Christianity through the Christian-*Juche*an Dialogue during the 1980s, and the Social *Diakonia* Mission during the 1990s.
- It will be argued that one of main reasons for the Christian evacuation to the South during the Korean War was that the great majority of North Korean Christians supported the invasion of the North, by the USA and the South Korean military.
- It will be argued that the persecution which North Korean Christians experienced (1948-1953) was contingent upon issues of land reform and political power, and one of reasons that brought about the "Anti-Religious Campaign" was the Christian boycott of the general election in 1957.

3. Periods and Organization of Research

This thesis will be divided into three periods:

- Part One (1874-1945) will examine the oppositional paradigm of church-state relations in Northern Korea before the partition.
- Part Two (1945-1972) will demonstrate how this pre-1945 paradigm influenced the persecution and suppression of churches in North Korea in the period following partition, and indicate what alternative paradigms emerged.
- Part Three (1972-1994) will examine the new paradigm of church-state relations that has developed since 1972, and show how this influenced the revival and renewal of the churches in North Korea.

The main focus of this research is found Parts One and Two, from the establishment of North Korea in 1945 to the end of the Kim Il-sung regime in 1994. For this period the research is based as far as possible on primary sources. However, it is important to

partition of the Korean peninsula and in North Korea after it.

understand the socio-historical background of northern Protestantism, which had distinctive characteristics in the field of church-state relations. Part One, therefore, will examine aspects of the history of Christianity in Northern Korea from 1874, when John Ross began his work with Koreans in Manchuria, until 1945, when Korea was divided.

Chapter I (1874-1910) will examine the history of the early Protestant mission and its socio-political influences in Northern Korea. It will also examine the relationship between the north-centered Protestant Christianity and the south-centered Confucian monarchy.

Chapter II (1910-1945) will recount the history of witness of northern Protestantism during the period of Japanese colonial occupation of Korea, and its relationship with the Japanese colonial state.

Chapter III (1945-1949) will examine the impact of the Cold War in the Korean Peninsula on the churches in North and South Korea. Attention will be given to the ideological struggle between Christianity and Communism in North Korea.

Chapter IV (1950-1953) will demonstrate how this struggle developed during the Korean War, when the Northern churches gave their support, along with the churches of the South, to the Allied Army led by the United States.

Chapter V (1954-1972) will show how Korean War affected church-state relations in the North, with the rise of the Anti-Religious Campaign that resulted in the “winter” of Christianity in North Korea.

Chapter VI (1972-1988) will give an account on the context and content of the external revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with reference to institutional aspects of the life of the churches, and the restoration of international ecumenical relations.

Chapter VII (1988-1994) will examine the internal renewal of the northern churches, with special reference to their dialogue with the *Juche* Idea and their social diaconal

works.

Chapter VIII will offer a theoretical summary of the historical development of the church-state relations in North Korea by developing a series of paradigms that triangulate the relationship through the inclusion of the third and vital element of the *minjung*.

It is recognized that Catholic Christianity also has an important history in Northern Korea, but this will not be included in this research for three reasons. Firstly, it would increase the scope of the study beyond the statutory limitations of space. Secondly, the Catholic church did not develop the same pattern of church-state relations as their Protestant counterparts, and did not revive in the post-1972 context. It is this revival that is the main focus of our research. It is only very recently that a Catholic cathedral opened in Pyongyang. Thirdly, even before partition the Catholic Church tended to isolate itself from interaction with developments in Korean political society, and it is this aspect that constitutes the primary point of reference in this thesis.

4. Methodology

4.1 Criterion of Language

In collecting, analyzing and evaluating primary sources from North Korea, the author has taken into account three points about language. Firstly, in analyzing the official documents and announcements of the North Korean government, or of its political party, it will be argued that they were often influenced by 15 years of anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle. The political culture in North Korea has been influenced by its military establishment, and the ever-increasing tension and continuous guerrilla-style struggle with what it perceives as US imperialism, rather than by the civil network of technocrats and intellectuals. Therefore, in North Korean sources most political language was militarized, and needs to be evaluated with care.¹⁴

¹⁴ A. Hunter and K. K. Chan also suggested this approach in their book, *Protestantism in*

Secondly, it is necessary to remember that there are influences from the official guidelines of the KWP's propaganda scheme in the official statements, in the expressions used, and even in some of the sermons of the KCF and its members. In the political system of North Korea, the KCF is regarded as a small, minor and subordinate religious cooperative organization of the KWP. Therefore, many official statements of the KCF begin and end with expressions drawn from the publicity of the KWP's policy. KCF and KWP documents are therefore written in the language of ideological protocol. In examining the KCF sources, the author has tried to draw out political and religious concepts from the protocol language that pervades these, as well as KWP documents.

The last point relates to the *Juche* Idea.¹⁵ It will be shown that the *Juche* Idea contains significant elements of religious discourse. The KCF has limited freedom of expression, being obliged not to collide with and damage the ideological system of the *Juche* Idea.¹⁶ On the other hand, the KCF has tried to find a "common ground" between Christianity and the *Juche* Idea through a process of dialogue. This situation should always be considered in any interpretation of the KCF sources.

The spellings of place-names in this thesis are in most cases those approved by the Committee of Romanization, Department of Culture and Tourism in South Korea. The Romanization of the title of sources in Korea is based on the New Revised Principle of Romanization approved on 4th July 2000 by the Committee. The names of political organizations and leaders in Northern and North Korea have been taken from *Young Jo, Jo Young Sajeon* (North Korean-English Dictionary), published in North Korea in 1999. The names of Korean authors writing in English are spelled as given, and in the order of

Contemporary China, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 10.

¹⁵ The *Juche* Idea is the official ideology of the North Korean state. For details, see, Chapter V, Section 1.3 and Chapter VII, Section 2.1.

¹⁶ For example, Young-Sup Kang, the keynote speaker in the Macao meeting, started his talk by 1.Praising God 2.Introducing the excellent leadership of Kim Jong-Il 3.Excellency of the *Juche* Idea. Some South Korean participants immediately raised a "propaganda" argument. However, in an academic approach, 2 and 3 would be regarded as a fixed formal discourse in North Korean society. See, Young-sup Kang, "Task of Mission for Peace in Northeast Asia", manuscript, International Ecumenical Consultation on Solidarity for Peace in North East Asia,

given name and surname. However, some well-known and ancient names, such as Kim Il-sung and Yi Sung-kye will be kept in the Korean order of surname and given name, to avoid confusion.

4.2 Theological Criteria for the Analysis of Church-State Relations

In this thesis, the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea will be re-examined not simply chronologically, but interpretively through the filter of church and state. Three approaches will be used in the analysis of church-state relations. Each approach has its own justification.

Firstly, a *minjung*-centered approach, arising from the liberation of the oppressed, will be justified by the historical evidence that Northern Korean Protestantism is characteristically the ‘church for the *minjung*.’¹⁷ A *minjung* perspective precludes a privileged focus on elites in writing a history of the Korean church. Rather, it pays attention to the struggle of the *minjung* for the transformation of history. *Minjung* theologians insist that “*minjung* are the subject of social history,”¹⁸ and their story is viewed as the center of history in *minjung* theology.

Secondly, a post-Cold War approach will be justified on the basis that Christian socialism was an influential movement among Northern Korean Protestants during the period of Japanese colonial occupation of Korea. This has not yet received an objective assessment due to subsequent Cold War confrontation between South and North Korea. There is evidence that most Korean history writing, including ecclesiastical history, has served to emphasize the legitimacy and superiority of each one side over against the other, promoting one of the two systems, or ideologies, and attacking its opposite. Church history written from the perspective of South Korea demonstrates a tendency

29th January 1996, Macao

¹⁷ Chai-yong Choo insists that it is necessary to re-write the history of the Korean church from a *minjung* perspective. Chai-yong Choo, *A History of Christian Theology in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1998, 8-10.

¹⁸ Yong-bock Kim, “Theology and Social Biography of the Minjung”, *CTC Bulletin*, vol. 5, No.3, 1984, 67.

toward anti-Communism, sometimes resembling McCarthyism.¹⁹ This is used to justify the division of the Korean peninsula and keep the North Korean Church and South Korean Church separate. This thesis will attempt to develop a post-Cold War perspective in writing a history of northern Protestantism that strives for the reconciliation and reunification of the two Koreas.

Lastly, a post-colonial approach will be adopted in order to overcome the academic legacy of Japanese colonialism. For example, Korean mainline churches still keep silence on the issue of *Shinto* shrine worship. It is a responsibility of church historians to criticize the mistakes of churches in the past, so that they will not be repeated.

Of these three approaches, the *minjung*-centered approach is the most important filter that will be used to understand church-state relations, as applied to Protestant Christianity in North Korea. The struggle of the North Korean Church for the *minjung* in the process of the revival will be clarified. Moreover, it will be shown that the *minjung*-centered approach is a criterion for understanding the proper relationship between church and state in each historical context of North Korea.

This approach links up with the way church-state relations were conceptualized as an important ecumenical agenda, as far back as the Oxford Conference on Church, Community, and State in 1937.²⁰ Rather than addressing church-state relations on a

¹⁹ "McCarthyism means a fanatical opposition to elements held to be subversive (e.g. members of Communists parties), typically accompanied by the use of tactics involving personal attacks on individuals by means of widely publicized indiscriminate allegation, especially on the basis of unsubstantiated charges". *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, 1984.

²⁰ The official report of the Conference on Church, Community, and State held at Oxford in July 1937 was J. H. Oldham ed., *The Churches Survey their Task: Report of the Oxford Conference*, London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1937. The seven volumes of reference books were also published in the same publishing company. See, W. A. Visser't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, *The Church and Its Function in Society*; T. E. Jessop et al., *The Christian Understanding of Man*; C. H. Dodd et al., *The Kingdom of God and History*; R. Niebuhr et al., *The Christian Faith and the Common Life*; E. E. Aubrey et al., *Church and Community*; J. H. Oldham ed., *Church, Community, and State in Relation to Education*; J. F. Dulles et al., *The Universal Church and the World of Nations*; about the observations and findings of the conference, see G. K. A. Bell, *Christianity and world Order*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1940; see also, E. Fenn, *That They Go Forward: An Impression of Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State*, London, SCM Press, 1938; R. Rouse and S. C. Neill ed., *A History of the*

bilateral axis, the conference “triangulated” the issue by re-conceiving it in terms of church-community-state relations.²¹ Community did not mean “national community” as a structural and legal element of the nation-state.²² Rather, the conference considered grassroots communities in approaching the church-state relations.²³ There was a strong intention to construct the issue from a grassroots people’s perspective. This thesis will apply the same triangular approach to the analysis of the characteristics of the church-state issue of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, so as to include the *minjung* perspective as a dynamic element of the relationship.

This unique triangular approach of Oxford was a result of the concern of the ecumenical movement for suffering people. It is of interest that the notion of “community” was brought into the question of the relationship between church and state at the moment when the ecumenical movement was confronted with the totalitarian claims of the Nazi Third Reich.²⁴ In this context, the Oxford conference deliberately intended to clarify church-state relations for the sake of the church’s witness for “people”. Oxford did not restrict its attention to traditional legal problems, but concentrated primarily on the witness and service of the church in society. The reasoning behind taking church, community and state together was clearly that the church’s first concern should be how the Christian community can best serve suffering people in the wider community, not how it can secure its own institutional rights within the political system. The conference called all Christians “to a more passionate and costly concern for the outcast, the underprivileged, the persecuted, the despised in the community and beyond the

Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948, 4th Edition, Geneva, WCC, 1993, 587-592.

²¹ N.B., Originally, the theme of Church, Community and State of the Oxford Conference was proposed by J. H. Oldham in 1934 at the request of the Universal Christian Council. See, J. H. Oldham, *Church, Community and State: A World Issue*, London, SCM Press, 1935.

²² See, G. K. A. Bell, *Christianity and World Order*, 54-56. Bell, who was Bishop of Chichester, particularly criticized the German understanding the notion of “community” as “national community” (*Volk*) in relation to nationalism. In fact, German theologians translated the “community” in Oxford as *Volk*. See, P. Althaus et al., *Kirche, Volk und Staat: Stimmen aus der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche zur Oxforder Weltkirchenkonferenz*, Berlin, Furche-Verlag, 1937.

²³ E. Barker clearly stated this intention of the Oxford conference. See, “Church and Community”, E. E. Aubrey et al., *Op. Cit.*, 21-60.

²⁴ About this confrontation, see, Oldham, *Church, Community and State: A World Issue*, 8-14.

community.”²⁵ The Oxford approach therefore refuses to divorce the church’s relation to the state from its service to the community and its social responsibility.

The Oxford conference recognized the dual citizenship of Christians to church and state and “the dual loyalty to God and Caesar.”²⁶ However, it affirmed, “It is God who declares what is Caesar’s. Therefore, whatever the choice may be, the Christian must, whether as a member of the church or as a citizen, obey the Will of God.”²⁷ The conference understood that Caesar (the state) is “ordained by God” as “servant of justice”²⁸ for His people, but still stands under God’s authority and judgment:

We recognize the existing States as historically given realities, each of which in the political sphere is the highest authority, but which, as it stands itself under the authority and judgment of God, is bound by His Will and has the God-given aim of upholding law and order, of ministering to the life of the people united within it or the peoples or groups who are so united, and also of making its contribution to the common life of all peoples. ²⁹

The Oxford Conference acknowledged the authority of the state, but recognized it as relative not ultimate, an authority that can only legitimately be for the God-given purpose of serving the “welfare” and “life of people.” The Oxford Conference declared that the state is not the ultimate source of law, “not the lord, but the servant” of the people. In spite of this God-given purpose, the conference recognized that in reality, “often the state becomes an instrument of evil,”³⁰ which oppresses the people.

Therefore, the Oxford Conference concluded, “The church in differing historical situations may be called to take differing positions either of co-operation, criticism, or opposition.”³¹ It is significant that the Oxford Conference recognized all possible relationships between church and state according to socio-historical contextuality. However, what was important was that within the triangular relationship between the

²⁵ J. H. Oldham ed., *The Churches Survey their Task*, 74.

²⁶ E. Fenn, *Op. Cit.*, 65.

²⁷ J. H. Oldham ed., *Op. Cit.*, 82.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

church, the community and the state, the notion of the “community of grassroots people” was the crucial criterion determining whether the church’s proper relationship to the state was one of cooperation, criticism, or opposition.³² If a state acts as the servant of the community of grassroots people, a church may cooperate. However, when the tyrannical state oppresses the people against the Will of God, the church has to oppose the state. Indeed, this triangular approach of Oxford was a remarkable development in the ecumenical debate on church-state relations, affirming people-centered or community-centered criteria over against legal or bureaucratic considerations.

Applied to the Korean context, the Oxford notion of “community” can be replaced with the Korean notion of *minjung*, which means the community of marginalized people in Korean society. Therefore, in this thesis, the Oxford approach will be applied to the North Korean context as a triangular filter of “Church, *Minjung* and State”. This triangular relationship of church, *minjung* and state will be used as an analytical tool in order to ascertain what the proper relationship between the church and the state ought to be in North Korea

4.3 Research Methodology

The study has utilized a socio-historical methodology within a missiological perspective. This task has been accomplished through the use of archival sources, interviews, and a survey of relevant published literature, both in North and South Korea. It is impossible to study separately the historical life and witness of the Protestant Christianity in North Korea without exploring the history of its interface with North Korean Communist society. To interpret this experience, the socio-historical approach is a proper method of analyzing the internal and external actors of change influencing the revival and subsequent activity of the North Korean Protestant Church.

This method is employed not only in order to clarify the social factors affecting this

³¹ *Ibid.*

issue, but also to discover the subjective effort made by the North Korean Church in her revival. The study will use recently uncovered historical archives that the author has been able to access. The existing historical data have also had to be critically reinterpreted. The outcome is that the thesis stands in contrast to the existing understanding of northern Protestantism in South Korea.³³ The interviews provide qualitative evidence that takes us behind the written sources and references, allowing us to judge the validity, or otherwise of the documentary sources.

The missiological perspective enhances our understanding of the church's theology and strategy of mission, both in the South and in the North. This includes some missiological reflection on, and analysis of the interface between Christianity and Communism in the North Korean context. Special attention is given to Christian socialism in Korean Christianity, Christianity and nationalism, and the Christian ideological struggle with Communism.

In addition, both a socio-political analysis and theological methodology have been utilized to examine the context of northern Protestantism in each period of research and to illustrate the theological issues involved in, for example, *Shinto* shrine worship and the Christian-Jucheon dialogue.

5. Information on Sources

5.1 Archival Sources

The search for archival sources was conducted mainly in North and South Korea, USA, Canada, and Switzerland. The archival sources comprise letters, telegrams, minutes, reports, statements, memoranda, and articles in newspapers kept in various archives and

³² *Ibid.*, 77-80.

³³ In the tradition of sociology of religion, especially in the UK, historical data is widely used by revisiting existing historical evidence. Northcott shows the following examples. C. Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730*, London, Methuen, 1987; H. McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1990*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997; R. Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church*, London, SPCK, 1993.

special collections.

In South Korea, the author collected the official governmental documents of North Korea at the archive of the Ministry of Unification in Seoul. The archives provided useful information on the confrontation between church and state in North Korea, especially from the aspect of the North Korean government. The author also accessed the archive of the Institute for Korean Church History, which kept ecclesiastical reports and records of North Korean churches before 1953.

In the USA, the J. F. Dulles file in Princeton University Library was accessed in relation to Dulles' role in the outbreak of the Korean War and the WCC Toronto Statement. The North Korean section of the Yenching Institute Library at Harvard University provided useful information on the politics and economy of North Korea. The author collected some US governmental documents in relation to North Korea and the Korean War in the US National Archives at College Park, Maryland. In Los Angeles, Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong provided highly valuable ecclesiastical documents and data of the KCF, especially after 1972, from his private collection.

In North Bay, Canada, Mr. Eric Weingartner, the former executive secretary of WCC-CCIA and head of the UN Office in Pyongyang, allowed the author to make copies of personal archives on North Korean Christianity that he (Weingartner) collected during his days in the WCC and in Pyongyang.

The author also dug through the entire North Korean files of the CCIA, Asia Desk and General Secretariat of WCC in Geneva, since the establishment of the WCC. In the basement of Ecumenical Building, the author found – and was allowed to consult – many uncatalogued archives that contained detailed information on North Korean Protestantism. These were particularly illuminating of the intense argument among the world churches on the issue of faith and ideology in regard to the Korean War. They also provide much detailed information and statistics on Protestant Christianity in North Korea since the post-1972 revival. It was an extra benefit to copy a considerable number of early UN documents on the issue of partition of Korean peninsula from the CCIA file.

The archive of WARC provided considerable information on the Social *Diakonia* Mission of the North Korean Church.

When the author began this research project, visiting North Korea for academic research was not allowed by either the North or South Korean governments. However, the situation has rapidly developed since the establishment of Kim Dae-jung's regime in South Korea. The author was therefore allowed to visit North Korea for two weeks, by invitation of the KCF, in the spring of 2001. Most of his time was given to visiting the KCF, house churches and individual Christians for cross-checking the contextual validity and credibility of his research hypotheses. In addition, the author succeeded in collecting the statements, documents, and letters of the KCF in its central office in Pyongyang. In the Revolution Museum, important archival sources showing the Christian background of Kim Il-sung and his family were collected.

5.2 Interviews

In the study of World Christianity, oral sources are becoming more and more important as a research resource. This is an especially effective way of examining church history, particularly where a context may not easily permit the collection of written sources. Therefore, the interview method was also used in this research, especially for the years of the Anti-Religious Campaign in North Korea when the government prohibited the production of any written materials by Christians. With the post-1972 revival of Christianity in North Korea documentary sources re-appeared, but the politically circumspect nature of the material requires that it is cross-checked against the memory and interpretation of those who were involved at the time.

The interviews were conducted with three groups of interviewees: KCF leaders, local church pastors and church members, and specialists on North Korean Christianity. The first group of interviewees was the current KCF leadership, who have knowledge both of the history of the post-1972 revival nation-wide, and of the current situation of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. They were:

- Rev. Young-sup Kang, Chairperson of the KCF, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan; 5th-6th April 2001, Pyongyang.
- Rev. Kyung-woo Chang, General Secretary, 7th April 2002, Pyongyang.
- Rev. Choon-ku Lee, Executive Secretary for Mission and Lecturer in Systematic Theology, Pyongyang Theological Seminary, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.
- Mr. Jong-ro Lee, Executive Secretary for International Relations, 13th December, Fukuoka, Japan.
- Mr. Soo-ik Lee, Assistance for Mission, 12th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

In contrast to the first group, the second group was local church pastors and members, who were interviewed for their own historical experiences in their local contexts. It is of regret that the number of interviewees was limited because the author was allowed only two weeks for his fieldwork in North Korea. However, the following interviewees provided vivid accounts of their experiences:

- Rev. Sung-bok Chang, Pastor, Bongsu Church, 4th April 2001, Pyongyang.
- Rev. Kun-young Kim, Associate Pastor, Chilgol Church, 4th April 2002, Pyongyang.
- Elder Se-yong Kang, Okryu House Church, 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.
- Evangelist Sung-sil Lee, Okryu House Church, 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.
- Evangelist Bong-il Paik, Nominee for Ordination, 5th April 2001, Pyongyang.

The third group were internationally recognized specialists on North Korean Christianity. Most of them visit North Korea frequently, or have lived there for several years after the revival of Protestant Christianity. They provided not only practical information but also valuable academic studies of North Korean Christianity.

- Prof. Kyung-seo Park, Former Asia Secretary of the WCC, 28th November 2000, Seoul.
- The late Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, Former Lecturer in Religious Studies, Kim Il Sung University, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

- Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, Coordinator for Asia and Pacific, PCUSA, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.
- Mr. Eric Weingartner, Former Executive Secretary for WCC-CCIA and Head of the UN Office in Pyongyang, 12th April 2001, North Bay, Canada.
- Rev. Dr. Seong-won Park, Executive Secretary for Witness and Cooperation, WARC, 17th January 2001, Geneva.
- Rev. Young-il Kang, Former General Secretary of Korean Christ Church in Japan, 5th December 2000, Seoul.
- Rev. Dwein Epps, Former Director of WCC-CCIA, 15th January 2001, Geneva.
- Dr. Han Wen Zao, Former President of China Christian Council, 19th March 1999, Nanjing.

5.3 Secondary Sources

While primary sources for this research comprise archival sources and interviews, secondary sources comprise published and unpublished materials such as books, articles in journals and church magazines, dissertations and theses in relation to North Korea and North Korean Christianity.

6. Survey of Literature

As has been pointed out, there has not been a single PhD research on Christianity in North Korea. However, there are some published books and articles on the topic. The literature concerning Protestant Christianity in North Korea and its approach can be categorized as follows:

- History of Christianity in North Korea from a Cold-War Perspective
- Ecumenical Approaches for Reunification
- Historical Materials
- Studies from Sociology of Religion Perspective
- History of Christianity in North Korea from a Post Cold-War Perspective

Wan-shin Park, who is known as a specialist on the North Korean administration, published a detailed study of *The Policy of Christianity and the Reality of the Church in North Korea after the Liberation*. In this he discusses differences between church-state relations in South and North Korea, and argues that in contrast to the situation in the South, the North Korean church has allowed its ecclesial character to be diminished through excessive subordination to the state. He explored a wide range of government documents and information in South Korea concerning North Korean Christianity, and examined the political relationship between the KCF and the KWP. He concluded by characterizing Protestant Christianity in North Korea as follows:

For political propaganda, the New Testament and hymnal book was published in 1983. However, that does not mean there is religious freedom. It is just an exhibition for showing to overseas countries. The Korean Christian Federation is not Christ's church. It is an imitation controlled by the Communist party for its political propaganda.³⁴

This view has widely influenced the South Korean churches. Park's research is a significant criticism of Christian co-operation with Communism. It is true that the revived KCF has been politically active³⁵ and has been subordinated under the political power. However, Park bases his conclusion on too little evidence. The fact that a church chooses to co-operate with the political powers of the day does not necessarily imply collusion, and does not automatically disqualify it from consideration as "church" on theological grounds.

Kyung-bae Min³⁶ is one of the most distinguished historians in the South Korean church. He has dug out much important primary historical material on Korean church history with academic rigor. In his study of Christianity in North Korea, he and his

³⁴ Wan-Shin Park, "The Policy on Christianity and the Reality of Church in North Korea after the Liberation", in PCK Reunification Committee ed., *Bukhan Kidokyo Chonram, 1985-1995*, (A Collective Study of North Korean Christianity, 1985-1995), Seoul, PCK, 1995, 31-32. See also, Wan-sin Park, *Bukhan Jongkyo wa Sunkyo Tongilron*, (Mission, Reunification and Religion in North Korea), Seoul, Jigumunhwasa, 1994

³⁵ For instance, the KCF sent a letter to the WCC claiming suspension of 'Team Spirit 86' military training by South Korea and the U.S. army. KCF Central Committee, "From the Central Committee of Korean Christian Federation to WCC", 23rd January, 1986.

³⁶ He studied ecclesiastical history at London and Aberdeen Universities.

followers, Sawa Masahiko and Jong-min Suh, made a significant contribution. In his book, *Kyohoe wa Minjok* (Church and *Minjok*³⁷), he gives us his view of the history of North Korean Christian persecution and resistance:

Now the KCF is doing outward political propaganda for the KWP...but the real church has disappeared. The resistance of Rev. Man-Wha Lee to the general election of the Communist party at Yongchon, Pyungbuk in 1957 is an excellent example of religious struggling against Communist dictatorship in North Korea.³⁸

In this view, particularly, he is emphasizing that the Christian resistance to the Communist regime in North Korea is a continuation of the tradition of struggle that Korean Christians developed against the political oppression of Japanese colonialism. However, it is difficult to generalize the Christian boycott in 1957 as “an excellent example” of Christian witness in North Korea because this resistance was a direct cause of bringing in the Anti-Religious Campaign.

Furthermore, Min started his work from a faulty hypothesis, which led him to the conclusion comparable to that of Wan-shin Park. He maintains that Kim Il-Sung’s anti-Japanese guerrilla story was invented as a myth by Kim. He goes on further to state that Kim persecuted Christians because the Christians resisted his self-deification.³⁹ However, at present in the Korean historical field, Kim’s leadership of the guerrilla movement is widely recognized.⁴⁰ Moreover, the persecution began in November 1946, even according to Min himself,⁴¹ while the deification process did not begin until

³⁷ The word *Minjok* is difficult to define in English. Min defined “*Minjok*” in his view of history in contrast to “*Minjung*”. He understands that *minjung* is a socio-classical expression but *minjok* is a wider concept including common historical experience. (Kyung-Bae Min, 1981, 3-6) In literary usage, *minjok* is a compound word; *min* (people) and *jok* (*ethnos*). It has a similar meaning to “nation and *ethnos*” but is widely used in a Northeast Asian context to mean the independence of a suffering nation and *ethnos*.

³⁸ Kyung-bae Min, *Kyohoe wa Minjok*, (Church and Nation), Seoul, CLS, 1981, 443.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 440-442.

⁴⁰ The South Korean democratic government officially recognized in 2000, “Kim was a leader of independence guerrilla army, and his army contributed noticeably to the independence struggle under Japanese rule”. It was the first official recognition of the Kim’s leadership in South Korea. Ministry of Unification ed., *2000nyun Bukhan Gaeyo* (A General Introduction to North Korea in 2000), Seoul, Ministry of Unification, 2000, 103.

⁴¹ Min, *Op.Cit.*, 443.

1970.⁴² It is reasonable to suppose that the persecution was brought about by Christian participation in the competition for political power and their opposition to the land reform before the Korean War, and ongoing collision with the Communists after it. Min successfully recounted the history of persecution and resistance on the part of Christians in North Korea, but it seems that he failed to examine the causes.

One of the problems of Park and Min was that they worked from the biased hypothesis of a Cold-War perspective. They believed that authentic Christian churches were not able to survive in North Korea, and attempted to prove it. Another problem was that both scholars made uncritical use of South Korean governmental sources in writing their histories of Christianity in North Korea. For example, they often quoted *The Naewei Tongshin* (内外通信), the news agency of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency. This is not an adequate substitute for primary sources.

Kyung-seo Park⁴³ approaches the North Korean church from an ecumenical standpoint, especially in regard to the reunification issue. He has put together a documentary history of the ecumenical effort to cooperate with the KCF in his book *Reconciliation, Reunification*. As he himself says, he is neither a theologian nor a historian but a social scientist. His work displays these limitations. It is not a complete historical account, and his concern is specifically with the issue of social integration and reunification of Korea. Although he is a sociologist, he approaches the KCF with an ecumenical ethos promoting both the unity of the Korean churches and the reunification of Korea. He also emphasized mission and evangelism in a Kingdom of God perspective.

Heung-soo Kim should be remembered as the first scholar to attempt an approach to Christianity in North Korea from a post Cold-War perspective. He edited the book, *Haebang hu Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of the North Korean Church after the Liberation), and criticized the “one sided South Korean-centered” interpretation of the

⁴² Sung Choi, *Bukhanhak Gaeron*, (Introduction to North Korean Studies), Seoul, Pulbit, 1997, 137.

⁴³ He visited North Korea 23 times as the executive secretary for the Asia Desk, WCC. He was the professor of Sociology, Seoul National University.

history of Christianity in North Korea. He attempted to interpret the causes of the persecution from within the North Korean socio-political context, rather than accepting uncritically perspectives that concentrated only on the persecution itself.⁴⁴ However, although providing much valuable information about North Korean Christianity before the Korean War, he failed to collect primary sources after the Korean War.

Recently, In-chul Kang, a sociologist of religion, made a distinct contribution to scholarly studies of North Korean Christianity. He pointed out the limit and prejudices of South Korean historical studies of Christianity in North Korea, using the methodology of sociology of religion. Kang analyzed the various changes that took place in the social and religious status of the North Korean Church during the history of Communist rule in North Korea. His work demonstrated that the religious status within North Korean society has not always been weakened, despite what the majority of South Korean scholars have alleged.⁴⁵

The first attempt at a full history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea to be undertaken from a post Cold-War perspective was a collective effort by historians belonging to the Institute for Korean Church History. After several years of research, the institute published *Bukhan Kyohoe Sa* (A History of Church in North Korea) in 1996. However, the quality of their work is impaired by the lack of primary sources used in their account of the revival. The book focuses mainly on the history of the northern churches during the Japanese period, and on Protestant Christianity in North Korea before the Korean War.

⁴⁴ Hung-Soo Kim ed., *Haebang hu Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of the North Korean Church after the Liberation), Seoul, Dasan Kulbang, 1992, 53.

⁴⁵ See, Kang, In-chul, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Anti-Communism during the Korean War", The Sociology Society of Korea ed., *Hankuk Junjaeng kwa Sahoe Byundong*, (The Korean War and Social Changes), Seoul, Pulbit, 1992, 182-222; "A Recognition of Modern Religious History in North Korea", in Hung-Soo Kim ed., *Haebang hu Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of the North Korean Church after the Liberation), Seoul, Dasan Kulbang, 1992, 131-249; "Church and State under the USAMGIK and Syngman Rhee Regime", in Kyung-hwan Oh et al., *Church and State*, Inchon, Inchon Catholic University Press, 1997, 625-640; "The Root of the Fled Christianity: The Revolution and Christianity in North Korea after Liberation", *Yoksa Bipyung*, (Journal of Historical Criticism), Summer, 1992, 124-135.

7. Theology of the Remnants

Three theological terms have been chosen to characterize the North Korean Christians in this thesis. The first, “*Remnants*”, echoes the Biblical reference to the Israelites who remained faithful to their covenant with God in Babylon. The history of Israel begins with the Exodus of Hebrews. Yahweh chose the Hebrew slaves in Egypt as the people of God and made a Covenant with them. However, the Covenant community divided into North Israel and South Judah in Canaan because of their disobedience to God. Ezekiel proclaimed that if divided Israel and Judah repent their sin, Yahweh would reward them with the gift of reunification.⁴⁶ However, because of unjustness, corruption and ceaseless power struggle,⁴⁷ they remained divided kingdoms and were enslaved by foreign powers. In this context, Isaiah spoke of the “remnants” among the exiles in Babylon who preserved faith to Yahweh.⁴⁸ Even when the world is like a “cut-down tree” and there seems to be no hope, God still preserves “the remnants” as “the stump” and “the holy seed” in order to work through them.⁴⁹

The liberation of Korea after thirty-six years of Japanese occupation seemed like the experience of Exodus event for the Korean Christians. However, it also resulted in division. The Korean peninsula was divided into North and South Korea by foreign powers. In the North, the conservative Christians competed with the Communists for political power and the progressive Christians cooperated with the Communists as a means of securing ecclesiastical power. In this context, the worst tragedy in Korean history, the Korean War, was fought in the name of reunification. When the war ceased, most church leaders and ordained ministers evacuated to the South, with only a small minority of lay Christians remaining behind. In this thesis, these remnant Christians in

⁴⁶ “Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, ‘Belong to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.’ Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, ‘Ephraim’s stick, belong to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand.” *NIV*, Ezekiel, 37:16-18.

⁴⁷ Isaiah, 5:11.

⁴⁸ Isaiah, 10:19-22; 11:11; 11:16; 14:22; 14:30; 15:9; 17:3; 28:5; 37:4; 37:31-32; 46:3.

⁴⁹ Isaiah, 6:13.

the North are considered theologically, on an analogue with the “remnants” in Isaiah, as a “holy seed” for the revival and renewal of Christianity in North Korea.

The second term, “*Revival*”, echoes Isaiah promise the remnants would return to Jerusalem for a God-given purpose after the exile in Babylon.⁵⁰ They “will no longer rely on” secular power, “but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”⁵¹ This message was eventually concretized in the reconstruction of the second Temple by Ezra and Nehemiah.⁵² The restoration of the Temple was a symbol of the revival of faith in Yahweh.

Protestant Christianity in North Korea was internally “exiled” for one and a half decades during the Anti-Religious Campaign. But after 1972, the remnant Christians revived the North Korean church. In this thesis, the concept of “revival” is used as an external reference, denoting the institutional growth of Protestant churches in North Korea, with analogues with the revival of the remnants in Israel. In the evangelical movement, “revival” often means spiritual awakening. However, in this thesis, “revival” refers to the KCF’s constructive theological and ethical dialogue with the KWP, as a result of which there has been an increase in the number of house churches to 511. These churches provide the backbone of the “renewal” of Christian confidence in the public life of North Korea.

The third term, “*Renewal*”, echoes another important message proclaimed by Ezra and Nehemiah, themselves part of the remnant community; namely, that the remnant community had to undergo social transformation for the establishment of a fair, just and equal society.⁵³ While the reconstruction of the Temple symbolized the “revival” of faith in Yahweh, social transformation marked the “renewal” of the community of Israel.

In the North Korean context, while “revival” expresses the quantitative and institutional

⁵⁰ “A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Might God.” *NIV*, Isaiah, 10:21.

⁵¹ Isaiah, 10:20.

⁵² See, Ezra, Chapter 1-6; Nehemiah, 1:1-7:3.

⁵³ See, Ezra, Chapter 7-10; Nehemiah, Chapter 11-13.

growth of northern Protestantism after 1972, “renewal” means the development of the *minjung*-centered approach of northern Protestantism. This brought about qualitative growth and missiological development. The concept of “renewal” is an internal reference, denoting the theological, diaconal identity of North Korean Christianity.

It is in the above senses that the terms “remnants”, “revival” and “renewal” are used in this thesis as three key concepts for the analysis of Protestant Christianity in North Korea.

Part One

Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea

prior to the Partition of the Korean Peninsula, 1874-1945

Introduction

The aim of Part One is to give a comprehensive account of the development of Protestant Christianity with special reference to church-state relations in Northern Korea before the partition. It is important to examine the Protestant church in Northern Korea as distinct from the church in the South even before the establishment of two Koreas. There were unique characteristics not only of geography, culture, religious tradition, custom, temperament and socio-historical experience but also of Christianity in Northern Korea. These particularities will be studied in relation to the socio-political stance of northern Protestantism, in order to elucidate the socio-historical context of northern Protestantism before the establishment of North Korea. It will be argued that the issue of church and state had a decisive influence on the growth of the churches in Northern Korea prior to the partition.

It will be shown that in this period of the history of the Northern Korean Church, Protestantism opposed the Confucian social order and the centers of political power. These latter were located exclusively in Southern Korea. This oppositional paradigm appeared again in the Japanese colonial times. The northern church was an important center of the anti-Japanese independence movement.¹

It will be argued that the paradigm of church-state relations in Northern Korea prior to the partition of the Korean peninsula emphasized the distinction between the two entities. The church grew among and identified with the people, the *minjung*, in opposition to traditional social, economic and political elites that prospered in late *Chosun*.² It will be also argued that Christianity in Northern Korea was fundamentally committed both to social equality, which meant it was in conflict with the elites, and to national independence against Japan. It is of

¹ A Japanese police report of October 1928 indicated, "the Christian churches virtually control the national independence movement". Archives of the Government-General of Korea, *Kei Ko Hi*, No. 8036, 27th October 1928.

² *Chosun* (朝鮮, 1932-1910) is the official name of Yi Dynasty. Literally, *Chosun* means "the land of morning calm".

interest to note that Christian theologians in Northern Korea, like Chang-joon Kim,³ advocated Christian socialism even before the establishment of Communist rule in North Korea. While the study of Christianity in Northern Korea prior to the partition is important in itself, it also provides essential background information for understanding the role of the Protestant Church in Communist North Korea.

³ Concerning Christian socialism in Northern Korea and Kim Chang-joon, see, Heung-soo Kim ed., *Iljeha Hankuk Kidokyo wa Sahoejueui*, (Christianity and Socialism in Korea under Japanese Rule), Seoul, IKCH, 1992.

Chapter I

Equality and Enlightenment: Protestant Mission and the Socio-Political Awakening of the Northern *Minjung*, 1874-1910

Politically, North Korea was born on 15th August 1945 when Korea was liberated after thirty-six years of Japanese colonial occupation. The Korean peninsula was divided by the 38th parallel according to a secret agreement made between the USA and the former USSR as part of the Yalta Treaty. This was drawn up just before the liberation of Korea.⁴ The USA and USSR justified the partition as a means of disarming the Japanese forces in Korea. What began as a provisional partition for immediate purposes was continued long afterwards, for the geo-political benefit of the USA and the USSR in the Cold War. Two years after the liberation, in 1947, a break-away government was established to the south of the parallel with the support of the USA military, and in cooperation with Koreans who had been pro-Japanese during the colonial times. Just after this, Kim Il-sung's guerrilla army built the Communist regime in the North, with the support of the USSR Army.

After the Korean War, the UN and North Korea agreed the truce that established the 'demilitarized zone (DMZ),' which was similarly in the latitude to the 38th parallel. This was the origin of the geographical division, and the setting-up of two Koreas.⁵ However, even before the establishment of the North Korean government in 1946, there had been cultural, social, political and geographical distinctions between the North and South. It is with these factors that this chapter is concerned, the aim being to illustrate the different ways in which Protestant Christianity took root in Northern and Southern Korea.

1. Environmental Setting

North Korea is situated between the 38th and 43rd latitudes, and the 130th and 124th longitudes. The area of land is 122,762 square kilometers, which represents 55% of the Korean peninsula.⁶ It comprises the *Pyungan*, *Hamkyung*, *Whanghae* provinces that traditionally

⁴ B. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, vol. 1, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1981, 109-110.

⁵ Concerning the history of division, see, D. Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, London, Little, Brown and Company, 1998, 1-26.

⁶ KWP, *Chosun Jungang Nyungam*, (The Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1998, 35

constituted Northern Korea; at the time of partition, the smaller regions of *Kyungki* and *Kangwon* were added. In geographical terms, Northern Korea forms a bridge between the Korean peninsula and China, and has therefore been an important place of passage. For instance, all historical religions in Korea, except the *Tonghak* (an indigenous religion) came, through the Northern route. This is also true for Christianity.

North Korea is predominantly mountainous in contrast to the 'lowland' of South Korea's fertile plain land.⁷ Because the arable land in the North is narrow and the climate is cold,⁸ agricultural production is very poor. Cattle-breeding, forestry and mining were therefore developed. Before partition the Northern Korean economy depended largely upon the production of ginseng and silk that were traded in China. This trade route was used for the early spread of Protestant Christianity into Korea. W. Blair, a missionary in Pyongyang, argued that Japan invaded Korea because of its abundant natural resources in the North.⁹ The Japanese exploitation of labor in Northern Korea was stronger than that in the South, with the Japanese colonialists putting Northern Koreans to work in the mines in order to prepare Japan for the Second World War.¹⁰ This economic exploitation explains why Christian nationalism and Communism were strong in Northern Korea during the Japanese occupation times.

2. Socio-Historical Setting

2.1 A Brief History of Northern Korea before the Partition¹¹

Northern Korea's history can be traced back through about 5,000 years. Dangun established *Kochosun* (古朝鮮), ancient *Chosun*, in Northern Korea in B.C.2333. From the ancient times, there was a long history of socio-political discrimination against Northerners by Southerners

⁷ There are about 60 mountains which height is more than 2,000 meters. Ministry of Unification ed., *Introduction to North Korea in 2,000*, Seoul, Ministry of Unification, 2000, 32

⁸ Cf. Annual Average Temperature of the South: 14 degrees centigrade
Annual Average Temperature of the North: 4 degrees centigrade.
Average Temperature of the *Hamkyung* province in January: minus 25 degrees centigrade.
Jang-ho Chung, *Hankuk Giri*, (Geography of Korea), Seoul, Woosung, 1986, 378-379.

⁹ W. Blair, *Gold in Korea*, Topeka, H. M. Ives & Sons, 1946, 2.

¹⁰ P. Duun well argued the history behind the annexation of Korea and its relation to the industrialization of Japan, in his book, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*, California, California University Press, 1998.

¹¹ For standard works on Korean History in English, see, Ki-back Lee, *A New History of Korea*, tr. E. Wagner, Seoul, Ilchokak, 1991.

in Korea. However, we will concentrate on the *Chosun* Dynasty in this chapter because it was the direct socio-historical setting when Christianity first came into Northern Korea.

General Yi Sung-kye established the *Chosun* (朝鮮, 1392-1910) Dynasty through a military *coup d'etat* which overthrew the *Koryu* (高麗, 918-1392) Kingdom, setting himself up as King Taejo. Although he was from *Hamkyung* province in the North, he cooperated with the *Sadaebu* class (literary *Yangban* class) from the South to strengthen his political power. He moved the capital from *Kekyung* (now *Kyesung*) in Northern Korea southward to *Hansung* (now *Seoul*), in Southern Korea. In place of Buddhism, neo-Confucianism was introduced as a sort of new 'state ideology,' and the whole of *Chosun* society was soon shaped by it. The whole social and political system was thus established on the basis of a Confucian understanding of social structure, which was highly hierarchical and oppressive.

Neo-Confucianism was developed by Chu-His (朱子), a Chinese Confucian scholar in the twelfth century, as a systematised philosophy of government with a sophisticated metaphysical base. Later, however, neo-Confucianism declined into empty formalism and concern for ritual trivialities, which only put burdens on the people instead of giving them any real benefit. In the eighteenth century, neo-Confucianism was challenged by a new school called *Sirhak* (實學, Practical Learning), the main concern of which was to illuminate the historical and contemporary workings of political, economic and social institutions, in order to improve the real life of the *Baeksung* (people).¹² However, the *Shirak* movement was persecuted by the neo-Confucians. *Chosun*, and lost a significant opportunity for social reformation.

The internal decline of *Chosun* was paralleled by its resistance to all external influences in a "Closed Door" policy (鎖國政策) that developed in the 19th century. However, under increasing foreign pressure, *Chosun* was eventually forced to open its doors. In 1871, it lost an important naval confrontation with the US (*Shin Mi Yang Yo*, 辛未洋擾, The Naval War).

¹² The "*Baeksung*(百姓)" a compound word of "*baek*" and "*sung*". "*Baek*(百)" literally means "one hundred"; "*sung*(姓)" means "surname." *Baeksung* signifies all common people excluding the upper class. During Yi-dynasty (*Chosun*, 1392-1910), *Baeksung* meant the common people who were oppressed by the *Yangban* class. The concept of *Baeksung* generally implies the masses who are obedient to their upper class. For details of the *Shirak* thought, see, Moonjang Lee, "The Historical Jesus and *Mokmin* Hermeneutics with Reference to the Description of Jesus in *Minjung* Theology in Korea", PhD thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1996.

Later, Japan emerged as victor over China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894) and over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904), managing to neutralise Great Britain by means of the Treaty in Portsmouth (1905). Japan then struck the secret Taft-Katsura Agreement (1905) with the United States by which each power had agreed to tolerate the colonial expansion of the other, Japan in Korea and the US in Philippines and Hawaii.¹³ Korea therefore fell into the hands of Japan and became its *de facto* colony. The Japanese police killed the Queen of Korea (Corea¹⁴) for her anti-Japanese leadership, and the country was officially colonized in 1910. Korea was a colony of Japan for thirty-six years, until it was liberated in 1945.¹⁵

2.2 Socio-Political Discrimination against Northerners

To study the history of Northern Korea, both secular and Christian, it is essential to take into account the tradition of discrimination against Northerners. This has influenced socio-political attitudes toward Northerners, and provides the sociological background of conversions to Protestant Christianity.

Regional discrimination against Northerners already emerged during the unified *Silla* (新羅, 667-918) times. Gung Ye, who led a revolt in Northern Korea against *Silla*, in the early 10th century, justified his uprising as follows: “*Silla*, the southern dynasty, unified the Korean peninsula with the support of foreign power, *T'ang* (唐) and gave *Kokuryu* (高句麗, BC 3C-667), the northern dynasty, to them. Here are only wild grasses in the former capital, Pyongyang. We need to recover our lost dynasty, *Kokuryu*”.¹⁶ This first revolt in Northern Korea was directed against the Southern oppression of the people of *Kokuryu*.

Even when Wang Gun, a general from the North, established *Koryu* (高麗, 918-1392) in succession to *Kokuryu*, he chose to site his capital in the South. The North was only considered good for defence. Central political power was dominated by the political elites of

¹³ Ki-back Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 394-396.

¹⁴ The name of Coreia had been officially used from 1897 instead of *Chosun*. However, there is a claim that during the Japanese colonization, “C” was altered to “K” by Japan because “C” of Coreia is prior to “J” of Japan. In this dissertation, the current name, ‘Korea’ will be used except quotations, which use ‘Corea’.

¹⁵ See, D. McNamara, *The Colonial Origins of Korean Enterprise, 1910-1945*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

¹⁶ Quoted from Institute for Korean History, *Chosun Tongsa*, (A History of Chosun), Pyongyang, Institute for Social Science Press, 1987, 170.

the South. When an attempt was made to re-locate the capital in the North, civil conflict ensued. This is evidence of the tensions between North and South, between the military leaders (North) and the educated intellectuals (South), between Buddhist power (North) and Confucian power (South), between the anti-Chinese North and the pro-Chinese South.¹⁷

Discriminating attitudes toward the North were on occasion perpetuated by Northerners themselves. For Example, Lee Sung-kye, the founder of *Chosun* was from the North, but he joined hands with the Southerners in order to create a political base for his dynasty. To this end he ordered: "Do not appoint the Northerners to the higher posts of central government".¹⁸ Eventually, after several unsuccessful revolts among governors of the northern provinces,¹⁹ discrimination was legalized in *Kyung Kuk Dae Jeon* (經國大典, The Great Ruling Law) promulgated by King Sejo in 1467.²⁰ Further restrictions against Northerners were introduced in the *Sok Dae Jeon* (續大典, The Revised Great Law) of 1746 which prohibited the appointment of Northerners to positions in the central government.²¹

Thus Ewha Lee reports, "There was not a single minister in the central government from the North and military generals were replaced by the Southerners in *Chosun*".²² A representative *Shirak* scholar, Lee Ik, noted this as a cause of growing Northern resentment:

The Personnel Department is busy to oppress the Northern elites. Even though there are excellent intellectuals in the North, their future would be blighted. There has been increased social anger in the North.²³

The tradition of legal and political subordination of the North was formalized in the instruction to new appointees to official positions. For example, Ahn Jung-bok's *Im Kwan Jeong Yo* or Introduction to the Appointment of Officials makes the following distinction between the North and South:

¹⁷ Ewha Lee, *Hankuk eui Pabul*, (Regionalism in Korea), Seoul, Yeokang Publishing Co., 1991, 119.

¹⁸ Yi Chung-whan, *Tak Ri Gi* (擇理志-八道總論, Introduction to Eight Provinces), 1453.

¹⁹ E.g. The attempt of military *coup d'etat* of Lee Jing-ok(1453), governor of *Hamkil* province (now Hamkyung); the uprising of Lee Si-ae(1467) in the same province

²⁰ Ewha Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 125

²¹ *Sok Dae Jeon* (續大典, The Revised Great Law, 1746), Article *Jesu*, (除授, Restrictions of Personnel)

²² Ewha. Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 127

²³ Lee Ik, *Seong Ho Sa Seol You Sun*, (星湖辭設類選, Selective Writings of Lee Ik), "An Article on Personnel Policy and the Human Resources in Northern Korea", 18C.

Northern Korea

Ham-kyung province is the fighting dog;
Pyung-an province is the tiger jumping out of forest;
Hwang-hae province is the cattle tilling the stone field.

Southern Korea

Kang-won province is the old Buddha under a rock;
Kyung-ki province is the beautiful lady in a mirror;
Kyung-sang province has great loyalty like the pine tree and bamboo.²⁴

Ahn went on to describe the people in the northern provinces as animals while the people in the southern provinces were the epitomes of civility. He even suggested, "It is necessary to civilize the Northerners with some punishment because the customs in the North are wicked".²⁵

These recurrent examples of historic discrimination against Northerners must be understood in the context of the Confucian social order that was established by the *Chosun* dynasty. *Chosun* society was divided into four classes. The upper class comprised the *Yangban* (兩班), a term that denotes "two orders"-i.e. the *Dongban* (東班) or East Order that comprised civil officials, and the *Seoban* (西班) or West Order that denoted military officials. These formed the ruling class. They were educated in Chinese, and their culture was permeated by Chinese social values.²⁶ After the *Yangban* came the *Jung-in* (中人), the middle class that provided a second tier of social and administrative manpower: interpreters, astrologers, medical doctors, accountants, transcribers, lawyers and artists in the royal court. Beneath this administrative class came those who were involved in production, the *Pyungmin* (平民) class that comprised farmers, artisans and merchants. Beneath them were the *Chunmin* (賤民) class that comprised dancers, singers, slaughterers, butchers, shamans, and slaves.²⁷

The majority of Northerners belonged to the *Pyungmin* class, engaged in cattle breeding, forestry, trade, mining and peasant farming. They were considered inferior by the *Yangban*

²⁴ Ahn Jung-bok, *Im Kwan Jeong Yo* (臨管政要, An Introduction to Appointment of Officials), "*Pung Sok Jang*" (風俗章, Chapter of Folklore), 17C; quoted, IKCH ed., *Bukhan Kyohoe Sa* (A History of North Korean Church), Seoul, IKCH, 1996, 31.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29

²⁶ The other classes used the *Hangul*, Korean. See, J. Ross, "The Christian Dawn in Korea", *The Korea Mission Field*, vol. 33, No. 7, 1937, 134.

²⁷ For details, see, Sung-il Choi, "John Ross (1842-1915) and the Korean Protestant Church: The First Korean Bible and its Relation to the Protestant Origins in Korea", PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992, 12-18.

and *Jung-in* classes. Even those Northerners who did belong to these ruling and administrative classes identified with their own class, and adopted its social and cultural attitudes, and not with fellow-Northerners of lower standing. There was much social antipathy, therefore, among these different classes in the North and between the *Yangban* elite of the South and the northern *minjung*. The latter raised frequent revolts against the central government and the Confucian social order.²⁸

2.3 'Closed Door' Policy and 'Openness' of Northerners

Against this social background, it is understandable that the Northerners were more open to foreign cultures because the domestic socio-political and economical situation of *Chosun* seemed hopeless to them. For example, John Ross stated that some Northerners visited him and wanted to learn what they could about western countries.²⁹ In the 19th century many poor peasants in Northern Korea fled to Manchuria or to Russian territory across Korea's border.³⁰ Northern merchants extended their trade northwards in order to overcome marginalization in a Korean economy dominated by the South. From the mid 17th century, Northern Korean traders traveled in China and Japan, and regular markets were developed near to the northern borders and harbors. The northern traders exported ginseng, silver, paper, silk thread, and leather and imported medicine, jewels, glass, stationery etc.³¹ For these reasons, Northerners developed a pioneer spirit, and were generally much more open to engagement with foreign civilization than were the Southerners.³²

The central government closed the borders of *Chosun*, especially after the Opium War, 1839-1842. In addition to Western colonial competition in China, the spread of Catholicism in *Chosun* made the government fearful of the Western colonial powers and so it developed the 'Closed Door' policy (鎖國政策), as a means of protecting *Chosun* from the Westerners who

²⁸ *Minjung* theologians interpret these revolts from the perspective of economic exploitation. See, Kwang-sun Suh, *The Korean Minjung in Christ*, Hong Kong, CCA, 1991; Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung*, Hong Kong, CCA, 1992. C.f. K. Wells, *South Korea's Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence*, Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press, 1995.

²⁹ J. Ross, "The Christian Dawn in Korea", *The Missionary Review of the World*, 1890, 241.

³⁰ Manchuria was considered as the land of *Chosun* before the Sino-Japanese War (1894). There were 28 *Chosun* towns in Manchuria under the administration of the governor of Kangkye. Sung-je Koh, "A Socio-historical Analysis of Agricultural Migration to Manchuria", *Baeksan Hakbo*, vol. 10, 173-175.

³¹ See, IKCH ed., *Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of Church in North Korea), 32-33.

³² Southerners gave them the nickname of "misers".

continuously asked to open the market of *Chosun*. Backed up by warships, these approaches resulted in several naval collisions.³³ Finally, the government locked its door. The 'Closed Door' policy was an economic blow to Northern Korea, destroying its prospects for international trade. It is a further example of how central government policy was set with disregard for its consequences upon Northern interests.

From the above research, it is possible to draw three conclusions about the socio-historical temperament of the Northerners: firstly, Northerners are marked by the spirit of resistance to the oppressive power; secondly, they are open to foreign culture; and lastly, they have a strong pioneer spirit.³⁴ These characteristics proved fertile for the rapid acceptance of Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea in the 19th century.

3. The Religious Setting of Northern Korea

3.1 Traditional Religions

In the eyes of 19th century western missionaries, the traditional religions (Buddhism, Confucianism and Shamanism) of *Chosun* seemed to have lost their spiritual vitality and dynamic. To the missionaries they seemed disconnected from the reality of people's life. K. Gützlaff,³⁵ who traveled through Chosun in 1832, maintained, "Koreans are not interested in religion".³⁶ P. Lowell, who stayed in Korea from 1883-1884, similarly observed that there were no regular religious ceremonies in Seoul. Noting that there were lots of temples and totems in the city, he concluded that Koreans had not developed a form of higher religion.³⁷ I. Bishop, who had comparatively wide knowledge of Korean religions, took the view that the Korean people were merely interested in the ritual of ancestral worship.³⁸

³³ E.g. In 1866, A. Roze, the commander of French Asiatic Squadron, invaded the west coast of *Chosun*.

³⁴ J. Ross stated that when he invited Yi Ung-chan as a language teacher: "If it were known in his native country that he had gone to serve the foreigner, all his relatives would be thrown into prison, and principal man among them probably beheaded". J. Ross, *Op. Cit.*, 242

³⁵ See, H. Gensichen, "Gützlaff, Karl Friedrich August", in G. H. Anderson ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions (BDCM)*, New York, Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998, 272.

³⁶ See, K. Gützlaff, *The Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, & 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands*, London, Frederick Westly & A. H. Danis, 1834, 239.

³⁷ P. Lowell, *Chosen the Land of Morning Calm*, Boston: Ticknor & Co., 1886, 183

³⁸ I. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, London, John Murray, 1898, 399.

These criticisms have two edges. In the case of Buddhism, its religious activity was banned and the temples were banished to the mountains as a result of the *Sung Ryu Uk Bul* (崇儒抑佛, Admiring Confucianism and Oppressing Buddhism) policy of the *Chosun* Dynasty. Therefore, it was difficult for Buddhism to relate closely to the lives of ordinary people. In the case of Korean Confucianism, it was difficult to describe it as a religion in the western sense due to the fact that it expresses itself mainly in the field of ethics and politics. As such it was the preferred tradition of the *Yangban* class of rulers. Shamanism was the religion of the *minjung* but it did not develop as a higher religion. It was the foundational worldview of the people. Shamanism had limitations in providing a new vision of life for the *minjung* among the radical social changes in the 19C *Chosun*. Therefore, from the perspective of religion and society, the criticism of western missionaries was reasonable.

Table 2) Correlations between the Religions and the Class Structure of Chosun Society

Classes \ Religions	Traditional Religions	New Religions
<i>Yangban</i>	Confucianism	Roman Catholicism
<i>Jung-in</i>	Confucianism	Roman Catholicism
<i>Pyungmin</i>	Shamanism, Buddhism	Protestantism, <i>Tonghak</i>
<i>Chunmin</i>	Shamanism, Buddhism	Protestantism, <i>Tonghak</i>

However, this does not mean that the Korean people are irreligious as Gützlaff had thought. The western missionaries understood the religions in North East Asia from the perspective of institutionalized and ritualized religion in the West. From this standpoint, it was difficult to perceive the existence of internalized factors of traditional religions among the Korean people.³⁹ J. Gale, the dean of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary in the early 20th century, argued that if Koreans superficially seemed to have no interest in religion, they were in fact highly religious people with a long history of traditional religion.⁴⁰

It was indeed true that Koreans were highly religious people and religious culture and philosophy was well developed in *Chosun*. However, the traditional religions failed to meet

³⁹ At the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionaries Movement and Non-Western Christianity, 6-8 July 2000, K. Lodwick also pointed out a similar misunderstanding of the western missionaries in China. See, K. Lodwick, "Representing and Mis-representing the China Missions: The Chinese Recorder, 1867-1941", unpublished paper.

⁴⁰ See, J. Gale, *Korea in Transition*, New York, Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, 1909, 67-70.

the real needs of the *minjung*, who desired a new religious dynamic at the end of the old dynasty. This desire was especially strong among the oppressed people in Northern Korea. An examination of the *Tonghak* movement and its explosive expansion will make this clear.

3.2 *Tonghak*

The *Tonghak* (東學), or “Eastern Learning,” was founded by Choi Jae-woo (1834-1863) in the South and developed as a revolutionary movement in the 1890s. Its aim was to strengthen an eastern tradition of learning against *Seohak* (西學), or the “Western Learning,” that was advocated by Roman Catholic elites. As a religious discourse, *Tonghak* combined a form of Korean messianic Buddhism known as *Mirk* and Christian theism. Its main ideas were the *Hu Chon Gae Byuk* (後天開闢), “the coming of heavenly utopian kingdom” and *In Nae Chon* (人乃天), “Humanity is heaven”.⁴¹ These two doctrines expressed strong socio-political desire of the *minjung* who dreamed of a new society based on equality, as opposed to the discriminatory class system of *Chosun*. The main idea of the two doctrines was to provide a utopian vision of an equal society, emphasizing the dignity of human beings. Sociologically, it developed a close identification with the *minjung*, and in cultural-political terms it represented a movement of opposition to the intervention of foreign powers. The *Tonghak* peasant’s army purged the corrupt local officials and attacked Seoul to break down the monarchy system for the *Hu Chon Gae Byuk*. However, the *Tonghak* army was defeated by Japanese forces in 1895.

The *Tonghak* was rapidly popularized among the *minjung* in the late 19th century. However, it was not strong in Northern Korea because its peasant army was defeated in central Korea by the Japanese Army. However, it did succeed in beginning a movement of social and religious change, giving a new socio-religious vision to the *minjung*, upon which Protestant Christianity could build. R. Speer observed:

The *Tonghak* Rebellion, instead of supplanting Christianity with the religion which Ch’oi had devised as superior to it, or driving out of the country all foreigners who were propagating it, gave to Christianity both a powerful impulse and the way for its

⁴¹ For details Concerning *Tonghak*, see, Yong-bock Kim, “Historical Transformation, People’s Movement and Messianic Koinonia: A Study of the Relationship of Christian and *Tonghak* Religious Communities to the March First Independence Movement” PhD thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1969.

wider dissemination. In the first place the conditions of discontent out of which the *Tonghak* Movement rose were favourable to the consideration of the message of Christianity. . . and when the *Tonghak* Movement failed, it left multitudes more ready than ever to listen to the missionaries. . . The people are now asking, what is the true way to worship God?⁴²

The serious social fragmentation in 19th century *Chosun*, which was the cause of the *Tonghak* Rebellion, was a fertile soil for Protestant mission in Korea.

3.3 Roman Catholicism

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, Roman Catholic Christianity will not be included in this thesis. However, in order to illustrate further the way in which Northern Korea was fertile ground for the growth of Protestant Christianity, it is instructive to contrast it with the state of Roman Catholicism in 19th Century *Chosun*. The Roman Catholic mission started one hundred years earlier than the Protestant mission in Korea. It was initially accepted by elites from the *Yangban* class, for whom it represented an alternative intellectual option. Therefore, Roman Catholic Christianity was strong mainly as a phenomenon of the South. At the same time, it was vulnerable to persecution in the South for being too closely tied to foreign armed forces. Its rejection of ancestral worship also gave it the character of being a foreign religion. As *Tonghak* had challenged these characteristics of a religious option for the changing social conditions of the 19th century, it was necessary for Protestantism to develop a very different image from Roman Catholicism in Northern Korea.

From the above survey of the religious context of Northern Korea, it can be concluded that both the traditional religions and Roman Catholicism had been unable to renew themselves as vehicles of transformation in the changing socio-cultural-political conditions of 19th century Korea. It was into this situation, Protestant Christianity arrived in Northern Korea from Manchuria.

⁴² R. Speer, *Mission and Modern History: A Study of the Missionary Aspects of Some Great Movements of the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2, New York, Fleming H. Revell, 1904, 387.

4. The Protestant Mission in Northern Korea, 1874-1910

4.1 Pre-History

The first missionary to visit Northern Korea was Karl F. A. Gützlaff (1803-1851), who sailed from China down the western coast of Northern Korea in 1832 as a chaplain of the warship, *Lord Amherst*. He asked the *Chosun* government to open its door for international trade and Protestant mission. However, the government refused, doubting Gützlaff's real intention because the *Lord Amherst* was armed and the crew was interested in the suitability of the North-West coast for a military base.⁴³ Therefore, Gützlaff and *Lord Amherst* were forced to leave after one month. Later, Gützlaff wrote a book entitled, *The Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, & 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands*,⁴⁴ in which he made the case for Protestant mission to Korea.⁴⁵

It was the Scottish missionary, Alexander Williamson (1829-1890), a member of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the first overseas agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland in China,⁴⁶ who was the first Protestant to undertake evangelism in Korea. Through his close contact with Korean Catholic refugees in China, he became interested in Korea. He visited Korean towns and the 'Corean Gates' in Manchuria for evangelism. He even met the Korean Special Ambassador to China, Yi Poong-ik, to ask his co-operation.⁴⁷ Furthermore, he sent R. J. Thomas, another LMS missionary, and A. Douthwaite, a China Inland Mission (CIM) missionary to Korea. Later, John Ross and John MacIntyre were introduced to Korea

⁴³ Kyung-bae Min, *A History of Korean Church*, Seoul, CLS, 1982, 137

⁴⁴ Concerning representations and misrepresentations of K. Gützlaff as a missionary, see, J. Lutz, "Karl A. Gützlaff: Charlatan and Genius, Philanthropist and Crook?", unpublished paper at the seminar of the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and Non-Western Christianity, 6-8 July 2000; "The Legacy of Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff", *IBMR*, vol.24, 2000, 123-126.

⁴⁵ "In the great plan of the eternal God, there will be a time of merciful visitation for them. While looking for this, we ought to be very anxious to hasten its approach by diffusing the glorious doctrine of the cross by all means in our power... The Scripture teaches us to believe that God can bless even these feeble beginnings. Let us hope that better days will soon dawn for Corea", K. Gützlaff, *The Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, & 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands*, London, Frederick Westly & A. H. Danis, 1834, 273.

⁴⁶ R. Covell, "Williamson, Alexander", *BDCM*, 738.

⁴⁷ Concerning his journey, see, A. Williamson, *Journeys in North China, Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia with Some Account of Corea*, 2 vols., Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1870.

by Williamson. Lak-joon Paik stated that “Williamson had a wide understanding and a calling for mission to Korea”.⁴⁸

The first stage of Protestant mission in Korea ended in tragedy. Robert J. Thomas (1839-1866) was the first missionary appointed to Korea.⁴⁹ He was born in Wales and educated at New College, London University. He became a LMS missionary in China in 1863. However, when his lack of success in China was criticized by the LMS, Williamson introduced him to Kim Ja-pyung and Choi Sun-il who were Korean Catholic refugees in China. Enthused by what he learned from them, Thomas decided to travel to Korea in 1865. He stayed two and half months at *Jarari*, Northern Korea, where he distributed Chinese bible and tracts, and learned the Korean language. The following year, he was on board a heavily armed American trading ship, *General Sherman*, as an interpreter as well as a sub-agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland.⁵⁰ Seeking to open trade with Korea, the *General Sherman* sailed up the Taedong River to Pyongyang. When the ship became stuck in a shallow stream, she was set afire and finally all the crew were massacred. Thomas himself was killed by the sword of a Korean soldier on 2nd September 1866.⁵¹ Even though his intention had only been to engage in evangelizing mission, his presence on board the heavily-armed *General Sherman* caused further misrepresentation of Protestantism by the *Chosun* government.⁵² This affair might possibly have influenced J. Ross’ mission method of self-propagation, using indigenous human resources in Northern Korea for evangelizing purposes.

It is significant that all three of these early missionaries contacted Northern Korea. That shows that the northern route of Protestant mission was established prior to the southern route, later opened up by American missionaries. At this point, it is important to argue the particularities of the two routes.

⁴⁸ Lak-joon Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, Yonsei University Press, 1970, 49.

⁴⁹ S. Moffett, “Thomas, Robert Jermain”, *BDCM*, 667.

⁵⁰ Thomas heard that the Bibles, which he distributed during his first visit, were being read in Pyongyang. Therefore, he strongly wanted to work in Korea. Letter from R. J. Thomas to Dr. Tidman, 4 April 1866; quoted from IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 45.

⁵¹ Concerning R. J. Thomas, see, Moo-song Koh, “Robert J. Thomas: A Historical Study of an East-West Encounter through his Mission”, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1995.

⁵² “Thomas 36 years old, height 2m 25cm, iron face, brown, black beard, gray suit, black hat with white spots, black shoes, animal skin belt with pistol and short sword, looks like an army officer”. *Ijo Silrok*, (李朝實錄, The Kings Chronicles of the Yi-Dynasty), 15th July 1866. “Pyongyang anchored, different ship, more and more mad, fire cannons and rifles, killed Korean People, to stop the fire, no other methods, only attack by fire, to fire ship”. *Il Sung Rok*, (日省錄, Records of the Pyongyang Mayor), 27th July 1866.

4.2 John Ross and the 'Northern Route'

The attempts of the first three Protestant missionaries to Korea failed because their methodology of mission was in the imperialistic mode. This failure motivated John Ross to seek a different approach, and in so doing he influenced the characteristics of Protestantism in Northern Korea. It is not the purpose of this section to give a comprehensive account of Ross' work. Instead, we will analyze the characteristics of the 'Northern Route' of Protestant mission in Korea⁵³ from the perspective of church and state, religion and society.

Ross was appointed to Manchuria by the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland in 1872. At this time Korea was closed to foreigners, and it maintained a strict proscription against Christianity. Ross soon discovered, however, that many Korean traders traveled to *Funghwan* (now *Kaolimen*) in Manchuria, "The Corean Gate", where a market was held four times each year.⁵⁴ In 1874, a few of these visitors from the North⁵⁵ were converted to the Christian faith and were trained by Ross as teachers, evangelists and colporteurs. With the help of these early converts Ross began to translate the Bible into Korean. The first part of the Bible translation (Luke) was published in 1882⁵⁶ and a complete New Testament in 1887. Between 1883 and 1886 colporteurs distributed 15,690 copies of the Ross translation and Koreans were led to faith in Christ as a result.⁵⁷ The distribution of Bibles and subsequent conversions were concentrated in the North because the hometowns of the Korean colporteurs were in Whanghae province and Pyongyang. At the same time, the colporteurs began building churches in the North by themselves. In 1886, the Sorae church, the first church in Korea, was organized by 70 members in Whanghae.⁵⁸

⁵³ The Northern Route means the route of Protestant mission from Manchuria to Northern Korea, followed especially by the Scottish missionaries, J. Ross and J. Macintyre. The Southern Route means the route from America to Korea, followed especially by H. Underwood and H. Appenzeller.

⁵⁴ A. Walls, "Missions: East Asia", in N.M. de S. Cameron ed., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, Edinburgh, T.&T. Clark, 1993, 589.

⁵⁵ They were Lee Ung-chan, Seo Sang-ryun, Baek Hong-joon and four others who were baptized by Ross. IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 144.

⁵⁶ J. Ross, "The Corean Version of New Testament: How I Came to Make It", *United Presbyterian Magazine*, 1883, 166-169; 206-209.

⁵⁷ Sung-il Choi, *Op. Cit.*, 276.

⁵⁸ IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 156.

4.2.1 Presbyterianism and the Bible in Vernacular

As has already been noted, the Catholic mission in Korea started one hundred years before the arrival of the first Protestants. However, due to its close identification with the scholarly elites among the *Yangban* Class, Roman Catholics used the Chinese-language Bible, Chinese being the language of the upper class. Among Catholic Christians, the Chinese Bible was considered the authentic translation. As a result, the majority of the population, comprising the *Pyungmin* and *Chunmin* classes, could not access the Bible. The same had been true of the sacred books of the traditional religions in Korea, none of which existed in *Hangul* translation – *Hangul* being the language of the *minjung*. In this respect Catholicism adopted and confirmed traditional linguistic modes, and failed to offer a transformative option that could appeal to the lower classes.

Ross' choice of *Hangul* as the language of translation was both radical and far-reaching in its efforts. As a Gaelic speaker in his native Scotland, he had a strong personal sense of the importance of the language of the people.⁵⁹ He justified his choice of *Hangul* on the grounds that "every person in Korea could read their own language"⁶⁰; also that the alphabet of Korean was "phonetic" and "so beautifully simple" that anyone could "easily and speedily master it".⁶¹

As Ross intended, his translation, known as "The Ross Version," brought a fundamental change in the religious and social life of the *minjung*.

This translation is to Corea what Wickliffe's was to England...The Chinese Bible is to Corea what the Latin was to "Old England"...It goes to women of that country, and to the lowliest and illiterate poor, to speak to them plainly, in language which all understand and employ in daily life.⁶²

The suffering people, the *minjung*, now had a means of becoming self-aware by identifying themselves with the suffering people of God in the Bible. This gave the *minjung* a new vision

⁵⁹ Ross was a bilingual minister. In the early stage of his ministry, he served at Gaelic speaking parishes in the Highlands. During his work in Manchuria, he wrote several books on linguistics, such as *Corean Primer*, Shanghai, American Presbyterian Press, 1877; *Mandarin Primer*, Shanghai, American Presbyterian Press, 1876.

⁶⁰ J. Ross, "The Corean Version of New Testament", *Op. Cit.*, 208.

⁶¹ J. Ross, "Christian Dawn in Korea", *The Missionary Review of the World*, April 1890, 242.

⁶² J. Ross, "The Corean Version of New Testament" *Op. Cit.*, 209.

of the Kingdom of God, in which every human being is equal through knowing the scripture in their own language. For the first time in Korean history the culture of the people assumed a dignity, as their oppressed language, *Hangul*, was elevated to the status of a sacred language.

Sung-il Choi has summarized the influence of the Ross Version upon vernacular language in Korean Christianity as follows: firstly, “it created the Korean Protestant church as a Bible-centred, lay-oriented and self-supporting church”, and secondly, it contributed to “the renaissance of the Korean vernacular”.⁶³ Choi also makes some criticisms of the Ross Version: that it used the *Pyongan* dialect in Northern Korea and therefore reflected some factors of Northern “provincialism”.⁶⁴ While these observations are accurate, the present writer would contest Choi’s conclusion that they weaken the value of the Ross Version. Looked at from a *minjung* perspective, these factors are more significant because Northern Korea was the most discriminated, marginalized and oppressed region in the Korean peninsula. Moreover, they clearly demonstrate that the Ross Version was exactly targeted at the *minjung* class, as Ross himself intended.⁶⁵ By using the northern *minjung* language, the Ross Version effectively articulated the socio-historical ‘*Han*’⁶⁶ of the northern *minjung* as the dynamic for the expansion of Protestantism. The Yi dynasty regarded this as a dangerous socio-religious phenomenon in the state.⁶⁷ Our point here is that the presentation of the Christian message was to the lower class of the Korean people, not to the *Yangban* class, and the language was also the language of the ordinary people, both written and spoken.

In addition to the translation of the Bible, Presbyterianism was also a distinctive factor of the ‘Northern Route.’ This influenced the issue of church and state in Northern Korea. Ross educated the Korean converts according to his Scottish Presbyterian background.⁶⁸

⁶³ See, Sung-il Choi, *Op. Cit.*, 236-284.

⁶⁴ See, Sung-il Choi, *Ibid.*, 158; 191-192.

⁶⁵ See, J. Ross, “The Corean Version of New Testament”, *Op. Cit.*, 209.

⁶⁶ “*Han* is an underlying feeling of the suffering people. *Minjung* are people of and with *Han*. The *minjung* are a *han*-ridden people, because they are politically oppressed and powerless, and economically poor.” Kwang-sun Suh, “Called to Witness to the Gospel Today: The Priesthood of *Han*”, *CTC Bulletin*, vol. 5, 1984, 60. Concerning *Han*, see also, A. S. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1993; Chang-hee Son, *Haan of Minjung Theology and Han of Han Philosophy*, Lanham, University Press of America, 2000.

⁶⁷ See, Kyung-bae Min, *A History of Social Movement in Korean Churches*, Seoul, CLS, 1987, 27-41.

⁶⁸ “Manchuria Mission”, *The United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 1 October 1880, 333-334.

The history of Reformed tradition has been distinguished by a commitment to social reform. Especially in Calvinism, public and political life are just as important as personal and ecclesiastical life, in contrast to Luther's "Two Kingdoms" theology. This tradition provided Presbyterians with a dogmatic basis for rejecting any political claim to an absolute authority. Only the authority of God is absolute, by comparison to which the authority of the state is always relative. If the secular state attempted to be absolute, the Reformed church would resist its absolutizing powers. In Scotland, "John Knox developed Calvin's doctrine of resistance so to lay responsibility for overthrow of tyranny not only on duly constituted officials, but on all people of God".⁶⁹

Ross was grounded in this tradition as a Presbyterian minister. In addition, as a Scotsman he was particularly influenced by John Knox's understanding of church and state. It is significant that this was the form of Presbyterianism introduced to Korea, especially to the northern *minjung* through the 'Northern Route'.

It justifies the conclusion that the Ross Version, a '*minjung* Bible' and Knoxian Presbyterianism played a role among the northern *minjung* comparable to the *Tonghak* among the southern *minjung*.

4.2.2 Mission by Korean Colporteurs

Another distinguishing feature of Ross' method was his training of Korean traders as colporteurs to Northern Korea. They traveled widely through Northern Korea, distributing Bibles and preaching the Gospel.⁷⁰ They organized several faith communities in the Yalu River region.⁷¹ This methodology developed as a self-propagation model in Korea.

Ross wanted to work in Korea. However, he heard of the failure of Thomas from Williamson. Therefore, he created his own mode of mission using the indigenous leadership which was different to Thomas' imperialistic mode. In-soo Kim argues that Ross developed indirect

⁶⁹ K. Ross, *Presbyterian Theology and Participatory Democracy*, Edinburgh, St. Andrews Press, 1993, 9.

⁷⁰ In 1896, an edition of 26,500 volumes of the Gospels and Acts was published by the western bible societies and distributed by the colporteurs. *Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1897, 242.

⁷¹ Concerning the communities, see, J. Ross, "A Bright Light in Northern Korea", *Foreign Missionary*, September 1886, 151-152.

ways using Korean traders for mission in Korea to overcome the 'Closed Door' policy. "This was one reason why he trained the colporteurs and translated the Bible".⁷² In one sense it was true, but there were more fundamental reasons for Ross' distinct way of doing mission. He had a strong independent consciousness as a Gaelic-speaking Highland minister,⁷³ and had been introduced to the Three Self Policy in China. Lastly, he had wide knowledge of the suffering *minjung* in Northern Korea. In this context, Ross developed his distinctive methodology, 'Korean mission by Koreans'.

His method was very successful because the colporteurs succeeded to organize the Protestant churches in Northern Korea by themselves. The northern *minjung* were evangelized by the northern Christian *minjung*, with the Bible translated into their own northern *minjung* language.

4.2.3 Sorae Church: The First Korean Church

After the publication of the Gospels of Luke and John (1883), Ross sent Seo Sang-ryun, an evangelist and colporteur, with these texts to Korea. Seo settled in his hometown, Sorae, Whanghae Province, Northern Korea. He traveled distributing the scriptures and preaching the Gospel. After two years (1885), he reported to Ross that there were seventy-nine persons waiting for baptism, and he was going to build a church at Sorae.⁷⁴ Ross desired to visit Korea to conduct the baptisms but it was not allowed by the Board of the United Presbyterian Church. Finally, the Sorae people decided to build the first Korean Protestant church by themselves (1886).⁷⁵ This was a very special experience in missionary, a vernacular Bible and an indigenous church already being in existence before any missionary had ever set foot in the place.

⁷² In-soo Kim, *Hankuk Kidok Kyohoe eui Yoksa*, (A History of Korean Christian Church), Seoul, Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1997, 110.

⁷³ Sung-il Choi, *Op. Cit.*, 50-51.

⁷⁴ *Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian Church*, 1890, 188.

⁷⁵ When the three representatives of the Sorae Church including Seo visited to Underwood to ask for conducting baptisms, Underwood stated that "they were examined before the whole Mission, and finding they had been believers for some years, and were able to state intelligently the ground of their faith..." H. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908, 107

4.3 H. Underwood and the 'Southern Route'

4.3.1 Presbyterianism and the Bible

In 1882, Lee Soo-jung⁷⁶, an official of the *Chosun* government, visited Japan to study modern civilization, and became a Christian under the guidance of his supervisor. He then evangelized some Korean students and built the first Korean church in Japan (1883). H. Loomis, an agent of National Bible Society in the USA asked him to translate the Bible into Korean in Japan. Lee completed translating the Gospel of Mark in 1884 and about 6,000 copies were published in 1885.

There was a contrast in what happened on the Northern from what happened on the Southern Route, particularly concerning Bible translation. The Ross Version only used Korean and targeted the *minjung* class. However, Lee mixed Chinese and Korean. The important concepts in the Bible were translated into Chinese and the adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions were in Korean. Lee maintained, "It is impossible to deliver exact meaning without usage of Chinese".⁷⁷ It is widely recognized that Lee's translation was more precise than that of Ross among Korean biblical scholars. Lee, a *Yangban*, emphasized rigor of translation for the literary elites in *Chosun*. When Horace G. Underwood (1859-1916)⁷⁸ and Henry G. Appenzeller (1858-1902)⁷⁹ came to Korea in April 1885, they received the 'Lee Soo-jung Version' for their work in Korea.

As we analyzed the theological background of the Northern Route, it is of interest to discuss that of the Southern Route. Even though the Methodist Episcopal Church also sent missionaries to Korea, Presbyterianism dominated the Southern Route because the Presbyterian Church in the USA sent far more missionaries to Korea.⁸⁰ Both Ross and Underwood were Presbyterian ministers. However, they and other Presbyterian colleagues

⁷⁶ He studied agricultural science in Tokyo. Concerning his life and work, see, IKCH, *Op. Cit.*, 1990, 157-182.

⁷⁷ Quoted from IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 1990, 165.

⁷⁸ See, J. Phillips, "Underwood, Horace Grant", *BDCM*, 689.

⁷⁹ See, E. Poitras, "Appenzeller, Henry Gerhard", *BDCM*, 25-26.

⁸⁰ Before 1910, there were 49 Presbyterian (38 missionaries from U.S.A, 8 from Canada, 1 From Switzerland, 1 From Australia, 1 from Britain), 25 Methodist, 6 Salvation Army's and 6 Anglican missionaries in Korea. Sung-tae Kim ed., *The List of Foreign Missionaries in Korea, 1884-1984*, Seoul, IKCH, 1994.

were more conservative on the issue of religion and society than Ross had been in the Northern part.

This difference must be understood in the theological context of the American Presbyterian church in the 19th century. Church and state were strictly separated in America, by the Constitution. This tended to produce a dualistic understanding of church and state among conservative Christians, who believed that the church had no mission responsibility in the socio-political realm.⁸¹ The early American Presbyterian missionaries to Korea, including Underwood, were puritans and conservative,⁸² and reflected this theological position. They were trained in conservative theological seminaries: Underwood at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and other early Presbyterian missionaries, S. Moffett, C. Clark, W. Baird and G. Lee at the McCormick Theological Seminary, the so-called “cradle of conservatism”. Most American seminaries in the second part of the 19th century placed a profound emphasis on personal piety. In that sense, the early American Presbyterian missionaries also emphasized personal piety rather than social responsibility in Korea. This resulted in a significantly different theological approach to mission between the American Presbyterians in Southern Korea, and those from Scotland in the North.

4.3.2 Mission by Foreign Ministers

The theological difference between South and North was compounded by the difference between indigenous (North) and foreign (South) leadership. Lee Su-jung wrote a letter, in the name of “A Macedonian from Corea”, to American Protestant mission boards asking them to send missionaries to Korea.⁸³ As a result of his appeal, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

⁸¹ “It (church) has no commission to construct society afresh, to adjust its elements in different proportions, to re-arrange the distribution of its classes, or to change the forms of its political constitutions”. J. Thornwell, *Report on the Subject of Slavery: Presented to Synod of South Carolina at their Sessions in Winnsbrough, November 6, 1851*, Columbia, Steam-Power Press of A. S. Johnston, 1852, 4.; “Leave it (slavery system)...as God has dealt it”, *Ibid*, 8.

⁸² “The typical missionary of the first quarter century after the opening of the missionary work was a man of the Puritan type. He kept the Sabbath as our New England forefathers did a century ago. He looked on dancing, smoking, and card playing as sins in which no true follower of Christ should indulge. In theology and biblical criticism he was strongly conservative, and held as a vital truth the premillarian view of the Second Coming of Christ”. A. Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East*, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1919, 540.

⁸³ Rijutei (Japanese name of Lee Su-jung), “Rijutei to the Christian of America, Greeting” *Missionary Review*, March 1884, 145-146. The *Foreign Missionary* cited his letter and introduced his work in Japan with the title, “A Macedonian from Corea”, June 1883.

decided to send H. Allen, a medical missionary and H. Underwood, an ordained missionary to Korea (1884). The Methodist Episcopal Church sent W. Scranton and H. Appenzeller.⁸⁴

4.3.3 Saemoonan Church: The First Church in Southern Korea

Unlike the establishment of the Sorae Church in Northern Korea, the first church in Southern Korea, the Saemoonan Presbyterian Church, was started by a foreign missionary, H. Underwood in 1887.⁸⁵ Underwood organized the church with two Korean elders at his house in Seoul. At the inaugural worship Ross and Seo were invited from Manchuria and Northern Korea. On that occasion, Seo pointed out two important points: firstly, “most members of the Saemoonan church were baptized before Underwood’s work”,⁸⁶ and secondly, “there had been the Sorae church and several worship communities in Northern Korea before the Saemoonan Church”.⁸⁷ There was no tension between Seo and Underwood.⁸⁸ However, it was clearly Seo’s intention to remind Underwood that the Korean mission was started from Manchuria, and that the first Protestant church had been established by Koreans in Northern Korea.

4.4 The Awakening of Christian Nationalism and the Great Revival Movement

Protestantism came to Korea when the country was just about to be taken over by Japan. This was a historical *kairos* in which Protestantism was called to witness to the liberating Gospel. Protestantism introduced the idea of democratic structures to Korean society, whose political institutions were traditionally bound to the monarchy. Some Korean Christians, inspired by the democratic structure of Protestantism, took the initiative of organising the *Tok Rip Hyup Hoe* (獨立協會, Independence Association) which launched a political reform movement in 1895. Their ideal was the formation of a national state and the realisation of an egalitarian

⁸⁴ D. Davis insists that King Kojong requested the American government to send missionaries. D. Davis, “The Impact of Christianity upon Korea, 1884-1910: Six Key American and Korean Figures”, *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 35, 808.

⁸⁵ Kyung-ro Yoon, *Centennial History of Saemoonan Presbyterian Church, 1887-1987*, Seoul, Sinang kwa Jisung Sa, 1995.

⁸⁶ Orr also noted that thirteen out of the fourteen inaugural members of the Saemoonan Church had been sent by Ross from Manchuria. “The Gospel in Corea: Notes of an Address by Rev. John Ross”, *Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian Church*, 2 June 1890, 188.

⁸⁷ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 162.

⁸⁸ They worked very closely and his brother (Seo Kyung-jo) succeeded Underwood as the second minister of the Church. Kyung-ro Yoon, *Op. Cit.*, 91-99.

society based on Western democracy. First they advocated a republican polity, and then a constitutional monarchy, as the political platform of their Independence Association. The Christian message that all nations, all people and every member of society are equal before God greatly influenced the formation of their democratic idea.⁸⁹ However, the *Chosun* government saw their republican polity as a revolutionary political idea that threatened the monarchy.

When the Japanese removed the monarch's powers after the Russo-Japanese war in 1904, democratic republicanism was embraced as part of Korean nationalism. The Christian leaders of the Independence Association recognized that the only hope of the country lay in the power of Christianity and Christian education. These men saw Christian mission as a vehicle of national independence and social transformation. The Independence Association was considered by the Christianized northern *minjung* as an organization in keeping with their socio-political aspirations.

However, the pietistic, non-political theological orientation of the foreign missionaries in Korea regarded these issues as non-essential. They sought the expansion of the Church in Korea through the spiritual power of the Gospel itself.⁹⁰ To this end they programmed the Great Revival Movement (1907). This nationwide effort for the evangelization of the country was also known as "The Million Movement." This catch-phrase expressed the missionaries' ambition to "conquer the people with the Gospel," to win one million converts in a year.

In one sense this initiative was based on a shrewd reading of the political situation and conditions of the people. The missionaries realized that political and social conditions had produced despair and hopelessness among the people, and they offered a spiritual answer to these problems.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Kyung-bae Min, *Kyohoe wa Minjok*, (Church and Nation), Seoul, CLS, 1981, 20-22.

⁹⁰ "In Korea...the causes that have been mentioned need to be supplemented by the fact that no one of them, nor all of them combined, fully account for such triumphs of the Gospel as Korea has witnessed. They undoubtedly prepared the way for the missionaries; but the best soil in the world will produce nothing of value unless the right seed is sowed and properly cultivated. We must, therefore, include in our survey the inherent character of the Gospel, its satisfaction of the hunger of the soul, and its mighty expansive power under the divine influence". A. J. Brown, *Op. Cit.*, 566.

⁹¹ "If it had not been the Japanese, certainly the twentieth century single-handedly would have crushed the old emperor (of Korea) and all he represented out of existence. Evidently the purpose of this plan of God was to bring Korea to a place where she would say, "All is lost, I am undone". ... Nothing remained for the people but to commit the whole burden to the Lord himself. ... The

However, the expected response was not forthcoming. Granted, evangelistic meetings attracted huge gatherings, and many people expressed a desire to become Christians. But the net result was not what had been expected. Certainly this was a blow to the missionaries' over-zealous ambition. There were 113,457 Protestant Christians in Korea in 1907.⁹² The missionaries planned to evangelize about ten times more in a year. This was an impracticable plan.

A more fundamental reason for the failure may be the fact that the Christian message of evangelism was not geared to the social and national crisis of the Korean people, but was limited to a rigid and narrow definition of the salvation of souls. The Korean Christians' aspirations for national "salvation" were completely ignored. Seong-won Park argues, "The missionaries' intention to de-politicize the Korean church lay behind the 1907 revival".⁹³ Korean Christians, however, understood the Gospel in their socio-historical context. Protestant Christianity succeeded to grow roots through the articulation of the socio-cultural and socio-political context of the *minjung* in Korea. However, this context was ignored in the Great Revival Movement of 1907. Only twelve years later, this was to be dramatically demonstrated in Korean Christian support for the March First Independence Movement.

From the above study on the early history of Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea, 1874-1910, it can be concluded that the conversion of the northern *minjung* to Protestant Christianity expressed two key hopes: national independence against the colonialism of Japanese state, and social equality against the 'Confucian feudal social order' of the Yi Dynasty.

Korean says: 'I have no country, no citizenship, no flag, no land that is my own...'. Under such circumstance, the poor Koreans would really and truly have possibility of knocking at the palace gates of heaven and making application for citizenship in the name of Jesus." J. Gale, *Op. Cit.*, 39-44.

⁹² In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 256.

⁹³ Seong-won Park, "Worship in the Presbyterian Church in Korea: Its History and Implications", ThD thesis, University of Bern, 1999, 73.

Chapter II

Colonization and Christianity:

The Witness of Northern Protestantism during Japanese Rule, 1910-1945

“When a people saturated in the Bible comes into touch with tyranny, either one of two things happens, the people are exterminated or tyranny ceases.” So argued F. McKenzie in his book, *Korea's Fight for Freedom*, which analyses the March First Independence Movement (MFIM) of 1919, and the Korean churches’ participation in it. This is something of an oversimplification, for it is not clear that either of these alternatives - the extermination of the people or the end of tyranny - resulted from the MFIM. The quotation serves to remind us, however, that the proclamation of the liberating Gospel certainly provokes reaction from a tyrannical regime. This is the context of the present chapter, which will examine the development of the church-state relations in Northern Korea under Japanese rule from 1910-1945.

1. Beginning of Japanese Occupation and Response of ‘Northern Church’

Japan forced an unequal treaty on Korea in 1876, which was a kind of repetition of what Japan had experienced at the hands of the U.S. in 1854. The Japanese policy was one of dual penetration through economic activities and military presence. They acquired an almost complete monopoly over trade on the basis of their military power, and began to manipulate the Korean political scene. From the time of the *Imo* Military Rebellion in 1882,⁹⁴ Japan maintained a military force in Korea. In 1894 Japan sent troops to suppress the *Tonghak* Revolution, and emerged victorious from the Sino-Japanese War. In 1895 Japan even eliminated the Korean monarchy by murdering Queen Min, who represented the anti-Japanese political power, close to Russia.⁹⁵ After Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904, Korea was forced to sign a treaty that made her the protectorate of Japan. Internationally Japan was determined to isolate Korea, so that she (Japan) would become the sole power in Korea: This was achieved through the Portsmouth Treaty, whereby Korea lost her right of independent action in the conduct of international relations. Under the protectorate a Japanese

⁹⁴ The conservative *Yangban* group broke the rebellion to re-establish the ‘Closed Door’ policy. They believed that the policy was the only way to protect Yi Dynasty.

⁹⁵ Concerning Queen Min, see, Hong (Lady), *Memories of a Korean Queen*, tr. W. Choe-wall, London, KPI, 1985.

Resident-General took control of the conduct of international affairs, as well as of economic⁹⁶, administrative, and judicial affairs.⁹⁷ Finally, in 1910, Korea was annexed to Japan as a permanent colony under the authority of a Resident-General.

This caused the rise of the massive guerrilla-style resistance movement known as the *Eui Byung* (義兵, Righteous Army),⁹⁸ throughout Korea. The movement continued until 1911.⁹⁹ Ki-back Lee reports that in 1908, there were 1,976 combats with the Japanese Army and 82,767 soldiers of the Righteous Army, mostly from the *minjung*.¹⁰⁰

Korean Christians also did not remain silent. They responded to the fall of the nation on the basis of their Christian faith. The churches in Korea, maintaining close contacts with one another, held prayer services all over the country.¹⁰¹ When colonial rule began to be brutal, the Christians' patriotic movement gradually switched from prayer to active anti-Japanese struggle.¹⁰² Christians organised the various underground political organisations like the *Shin Min Hoe* (新民會, New People's Association)¹⁰³ to struggle for national independence.

⁹⁶ Economically, Korea became the supplier of food to Japan; all the main industries were controlled by the Japanese, and Korea became a market for Japanese goods. The Japanese pursued a very aggressive land policy to claim new land as government land, through surveys and land registration laws. In agricultural sections, companies such as the Oriental Development Company were established to occupy extensive areas of land; such commercialization of land created the situation in which large numbers of the peasant population were turned into tenant farmers or became migrants to places like Manchuria. At the same time laws were created which helped the Japanese to establish companies in Korea and hindered the business activities of Korean businessmen. See, Man-kil Kang, *Iljesidae Binmin Saenghwalsa Yonku*, (A Socio-historical Study of the Poor under the Japanese Rule), Seoul, Chang Jak Sa, 1987.

⁹⁷ After Annexation the Governor-General issued various security-related laws such as the National Security Law (July, 1907), Order to Control Assembly (August, 1910), Firearms Control Order (September, 1912), and other criminal codes. They maintained an extensive gendarme network and police apparatus throughout the country. Ki-byuk Cha, *Ilje eui Hankuk Sikmin Tongchi*, (Japanese Colonial Rule in Korea), Seoul, Jung Eum Sa, 1985.

⁹⁸ Concerning the *Eui Byung*, see, Ie-sub Hong, "Protestantism and Korean National Movement", in CLS ed., *Hankuk Yoksa wa Kidokyo*, (Korean History and Christianity), Seoul, CLS, 1983, 168-171.

⁹⁹ Concerning the history of Japanese colonial rule and Korean resistance movement, see, B. Comings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, 139-184.

¹⁰⁰ Ki-back Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 405.

¹⁰¹ See, H. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, 1906, reprinted, Seoul, Yonsei University Press, 1969, 463-466.

¹⁰² Compare the experience of Chinese Christianity facing the reactions from the nationalists and that of Japanese Christianity, which cooperated with imperialism, 1920-1930s. K. Ting in his book, *No Longer Stranger*, 1989, 150, states that the Chinese Church seemed not to be patriotic in these times, therefore, the church was isolated from people. However, S. Masahiko, in his book, *A History of Christianity in Japan*, 1979, 101, maintains that the Japanese Church eagerly expressed her royalty to the *Denno* to overcome its isolation in Japanese society, and finally the church lost her identity.

¹⁰³ *Shin Min Hoe* was an underground organization of the independence movement. It managed mass

Before the emergence of MFIM as the first national scale independence movement, most Christian independence movements were located in Northern Korea. For a representative example, the *Shin Min Hoe*, which was the largest underground organization struggling for independence, was started in Northern Korea. According to a Japanese police report, the headquarters of the *Shin Min Hoe* was in Sacramento, California and had overseas branches in Hawaii and Vladivostok. The total membership including mass organization was 220,000 in 1911.¹⁰⁴ When the police arrested 123 leaders of the organization, 118 leaders were from the Protestant church in Northern Korea and only five leaders were from the South, two Catholic, two *Tonghak* and one non-religious.¹⁰⁵ According to Hyung-suk Kim, these northern Christian nationalists were the dominant group in designing the MFIM.¹⁰⁶

Japanese security police were therefore particularly vigilant in respect of the northern Protestant church. According to an official Japanese report, most of Northern Korean converts to Protestant Christianity had a socio-political motive: "A motive of conversion to Christianity is mostly to resist Japanese rule..."¹⁰⁷ This shows that the Japanese regarded the Protestant church as a front for Korean nationalism.

The following table represents a statistical survey of the growth of Protestant Christianity between 1900 and 1930. It provides clear evidence of the preponderance of Protestantism in Northern Korea over Southern Korea. The remainder of this chapter will examine the relationship between the growth of Northern Korean Protestantism and the nationalist movement.

organizations, schools, companies and bookstores. See, Chi-joon Noh, *A Study of the Korean Protestant Nationalistic Movement under the Japanese Rule*, Seoul, IKCH, 1993, 48-50; Yong-ha Shin, "Establishment of the *Shin Min Hoe* and its Contribution to National Independence Movement", *Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 8, vol. 9, 1977.

¹⁰⁴ IKCH ed, *Hankuk Kidokyo eui Yoksa*, (A History of Christianity in Korea), 298.

¹⁰⁵ Chi-joon Noh, *Op. Cit.*, 48-50.

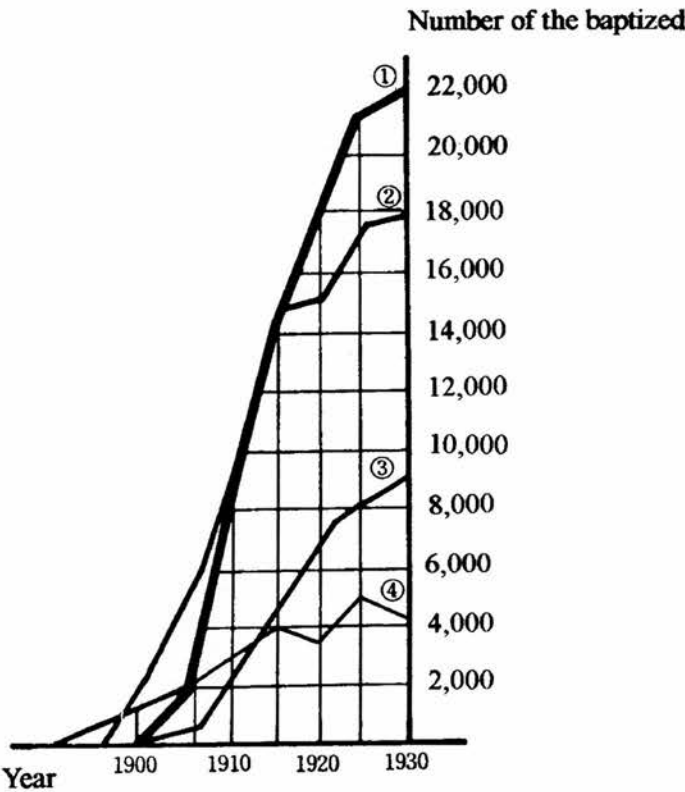
¹⁰⁶ Hyung-suk Kim, "Korean Christianity and the March First Independence Movement", Man-ryul Lee ed., *Hankuk Kidokyo wa Minjok Undong*, (*Korean Christianity and National Movement*), Seoul, Jongro Seojuk, 1986, 337.

¹⁰⁷ Record of Japanese Embassy in Korea, 1st November 1909

Table 3) Distribution of the Baptized according to Provinces¹⁰⁸

Samples:

- 1) North Pyungan (Northern Korea)
- 2) South Pyungan (Northern Korea)
- 3) North Kyungsang (Southern Korea)
- 4) Kyungki (Southern Korea)



2. The March First Independence Movement, 1919

Yong-bock Kim states that the “March First Independence Movement is recognized by *minjung* theologians in Korea as an Exodus event for the Korean People, as an intervention of the Messianic Reign.”¹⁰⁹ The MFIM was not only an important experience of the Korean independence movement but has become a key event in the study of church-state relations in Korea. It is at the root of Korean political theology, influencing both the democracy movement in its conflict with the military dictatorship in the South, and the Christian conflict with Communism in the North. Therefore, it is important to examine the MFIM and its relation to northern Christianity in detail.

¹⁰⁸ The numbers are from R. Shearer, *Wildfire, Church Growth in Korea*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1966, tr. S. Lee in Korean, *Hankuk Kyohoe Sunjangsa*, Seoul, CLS, 1966, 98-99.

¹⁰⁹ Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung*, 169

2.1 Rise of the Movement

The failure of the *Shin Min Hoe* taught the northern Christian nationalists that an independence movement centered in Northern Korea was too limited as a basis for a full-scale nationalist struggle. Therefore, they aimed to organize a 'national-scale mass struggle' that would include Christianity in Southern Korea and other religions.¹¹⁰

The direct cause of the MFIM was the death of King Kojong. King Kojong, the last King of the Yi Dynasty, passed away unexpectedly on 22nd January 1919. Although he probably died of natural causes, most Koreans believed that he was poisoned by the Japanese authorities. News of the king's death spread and people gathered in Seoul to mourn. Leaders of the independence movement also secretly gathered for the mourning. This was an opportunity for them to study President Wilson's recently proclaimed Doctrine of Self-Determination¹¹¹ for the colonized nations. They were also encouraged by the desire for independence demonstrated by Korean nationals living abroad,¹¹² especially when Korean students in Japan held a rally at the Korean YMCA in Tokyo on 8th February 1919, and read a Declaration of Independence. This event prompted a decision by the leaders at home to declare the independence of Korea on 1st March, two days before the funeral of King Kojong.

At two o'clock a crowd gathered in Pagoda Park in the heart of Seoul and heard the Declaration of Independence.¹¹³ Then the crowd began to march through Seoul, waving Korean flags and shouting "*Tokrip Mansei* (獨立萬歲)," Long live Korean independence! Concurrent demonstrations took place in Pyongyang and Haeju, Northern Korea. Although the Seoul demonstration was a peaceful rally, Japanese forces opened fire against demonstrators.¹¹⁴ 7,509 people were killed, 45,552 were injured, and 49,811 were arrested.

¹¹⁰ Hyung-suk Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 344

¹¹¹ Wi-jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1997, 51.

¹¹² For instance, *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 15th December 1918 reported that Koreans in San Francisco collected 300,000 Yen for the Independence Movement Fund.

¹¹³ See, Appendix A.

¹¹⁴ E.g. On Thursday, April 15, early in the afternoon some soldiers had entered the village (Cheamri) and given orders that all the adult male Christians were to assemble in the church as a lecture was to be given them. In all some twenty-three men went to the church as ordered and sat down wondering what was to happen. They soon found out the nature of the plot as the soldiers immediately surrounded the church and fired into it through the paper windows. When most of them had either

Ceremonies announcing the Declaration of Independence were organized in 212 out of the 218 counties in Korea. In spite of Japanese efforts to suppress it by armed force, the movement continued for over a year. According to the report of the Japanese authorities themselves, 3,120,000 people took part in the movement from March to May 1919.¹¹⁵

2.2 Christian Participation

After the MFIM, it becomes difficult to examine separately the issue of church and state solely in Northern Korea until the liberation because the independence movement now embraced Christians throughout the whole Korean peninsula. However, the Northern Korean situation continued to influence the nationalist movement as a whole. At this time Christians in Korea represented 1.5% of the total population. The majority of Korean Christians were in the North, and Northern Christians played a leading role in the direction of the MFIM. The northern paradigm of church-state relations, in which Christianity was identified with the people as an indigenously-led movement with a strong socio-political identity, shaped the independence movement in the rest of century.¹¹⁶

During the MFIM, 1919, the Christian community, together with the *Tonghak*, and the Buddhists, all called the people to stand up against Japanese colonial rule. The Christians participated actively in promoting the movement, and various groups in the church were instrumental in spreading it on a national scale. Sixteen of the thirty-three people's representatives in the MFIM leadership were Protestant Christians. The following table represents the distribution by religion of Korean participants in the MFIM who were arrested by the Japanese:

been killed or wounded, the Japanese soldiers cold-bloodedly set fire to the thatch and wooden building which readily blazed. Some tried to make their escape by rushing out, but they were immediately bayoneted or shot. Six bodies were found outside the church, these having tried in vain to escape. Two women whose husbands had been ordered to the church being alarmed at the sound of firing went to see what was happening to their husbands, and tried to get through the soldiers to the church. Both were brutally murdered. One was a young woman of forty who was shot. Both were Christians. The soldiers then set the village on fire and left. This is the brief story of the massacre of *Cheamri*. See, Duk-joo Lee, "March First Independence Movement and *Cheamri*", *Journal of History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 7, 1997, 39-71.

¹¹⁵ Man-yol Lee, "March First Independence Movement and Christian Participation", *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹⁶ "The leaders of the independent movement are Christians... Therefore, there is need to prepare a special treat." The Society of Imperial Administration ed., *The Secret of Governing Chosen*, 1937, 290.

Table 4) Distribution of Religion of the Arrested in the MFIM, 1919 ¹¹⁷

Religion	Number	Percentage ¹¹⁸
<i>Tonghak</i>	2,283	11.8%
Buddhism	220	1.1%
Confucianism	346	3.6%
Christianity	3,426	17.6% (Presbyterian: 71%)

Of the 324 women arrested, 310 were Christians - 233 Presbyterians, 42 Methodists, 34 other Protestants and 1 Catholic.¹¹⁹ 17.6% of the total number of people arrested were Christian. This was a considerable percentage, because the Christian population formed only 1.5% of whole population at that time.¹²⁰

According to the 8th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), lay people played a dominant role in the MFIM demonstrations:

Arrested Lay People: 3,804
Arrested Ministers and Elders: 134
Arrested Teachers in Mission School: 202
Lay Men in Jail (in September): 2,125
Lay Women in Jail (in September): 531
Punished by Flogging: 2,162
The Dead: 47
Destroyed Churches: 12
Destroyed Mission Schools: 8 ¹²¹

When we focus on the actual leadership of the MFIM,¹²² the northern Protestant Christian contribution becomes clear. According to Hyung-suk Kim and Man-yol Lee, MFIM originated with discussions in two centers: one was in *Pyong-an* Province, where the leading nationalist figure was the Presbyterian Elder Lee Seong-hun, a businessman and educator, and

¹¹⁷ The numbers are from Sung-tae Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 22-24
¹¹⁸ This percentage is calculated from the total number of the arrested (19,523 people, 100%) from March to May in 1919.
¹¹⁹ See, Man-yol Lee, "March 1 Independent Movement and Korean Church", in *Journal of History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 7, 1997, 7-20.
¹²⁰ Sung-tae Kim, "The March 1 Movement and the Role of Church", *Journal of Korean Church History*, vol. 25, 22.
¹²¹ "The Report of Casualties", General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, September 1919.
¹²² This actual leadership does not mean the 33 national leaders of the MFIM; rather, the leadership prepared the MFIM and invited the 33.

former leader of the *Shin Min Hoe*;¹²³ the other center was in Seoul, where Methodists took the lead. There was also a decision made among the students to launch a movement for independence, under the leadership of Rev. Pak Hi-do, general secretary of the YMCA.¹²⁴

A statistical analysis by region of those arrested in March, 1919 clearly shows that the MFIM had its widest support among Protestant Christians in Northern Korea, especially among the Presbyterians in Pyongyang, Pyongan province.

Table 5) Distribution of the Arrested in March 1919 due to Provinces and Denominations ¹²⁵

P \ D	Presbyterian	Methodist	Others	Sub Total (Christian arrested)	Total (Total arrested)	Percentage (ST: T)
Pyungan (NK)	556	165	9	730	2,453	29.8%
Hwanghae (NK)	131	75	6	212	945	22.4%
Hamkyung (NK)	101	18	4	123	808	15.2%
Kyungki (SK)	86	144	29	291	1,978	14.7%
Kangwon (SK)	Nil	Nil	6	6	105	5.7%
Choongchung (SK)	1	36	2	39	601	6.5%
Chunra (SK)	234	Nil	3	237	618	38.3%
Kyungsang (SK)	340	Nil	49	389	2,028	19.2%
Total	1,411	438	153	2,032	9,059	22.4%

P: Provinces, D: Denominations, NK: Northern Korea, SK: Southern Korea ST: Sub Total, T: Total

From the above research, it can be concluded that Protestant Christians led the MFIM with the co-operation of other religions, and that, secondly, the MFIM was largely indebted to the contribution of Presbyterians in Northern Korea.

¹²³ Hyung-suk Kim is a representative historian, who insists on this place. See Hyung-suk Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 344-358.

¹²⁴ Man-yol Lee maintains this place. Man-yol Lee, *The Cultural History of Christian Movement in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1987, 239.

¹²⁵ The numbers are quoted from Hyung-suk Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 359.

According to Yong-bock Kim, 80% of the participants of the MFIM were farmers and peasants,¹²⁶ and Christian participation reflected this same characteristic. This is why the MFIM must be understood from the perspective of the *minjung* who committed themselves to the movement, in order to change and shape history.

We make this proclamation, having in (the) back of us a history of forty-three centuries and 20,000,000 united, loyal people. We take this step to insure to our children for all time to come, life and liberty in accord with the awakening conscience of this new era. This is the clear leading of God, the moving principle of the present age, the just claim of the whole human race. It is something that cannot be stamped out, or stifled, or gagged, or suppressed by any means.¹²⁷

Yong-bock Kim claims that the text of the MFIM Declaration makes clear that the Exodus story did not remain solely a story of the Israelites, but that the Korean Protestant saw it as a real story, which was actually taking place in the Korean political context. They interpreted the liberating stories of the Bible analogically in their own context. Kim thus reads the declaration as the expression of a “messianic vision” of the Korean people.¹²⁸ Indeed, for Koreans, the independence movement was their Exodus process: Japanese colonialism was their Egyptian bondage, and *Denno* (the Japanese Emperor) was their Pharaoh. This is why the reading and preaching of the Exodus from the pulpit was forbidden by the Japanese rulers after the MFIM.¹²⁹

Why then, did Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea exercise such dominant leadership within the MFIM? Firstly, as we have seen, the Protestant Christians had a strong socio-political awareness that identified Christianity as a religion of the oppressed. This constituted the ideological background of Christian participation in the MFIM. Secondly, the northern church had developed the leaders of the Christian independence movement through the experience of the *Tok Rip Hyup Hoe* (Independence Association) and *Shin Min Hoe* (New People’s Association). Lastly, the Protestant church was the only national network, which could provide communication and networking between Christians in Korea and other parts of the world. *The Seoul Press*, March 1919, a mouthpiece of the Government-General, reports:

¹²⁶ Yong-bock Kim, “The Language of the March First Independence Movement”, in CLS ed., *Op. Cit.*, 237.

¹²⁷ The March First Independence Declaration, 1st March 1919.

¹²⁸ Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung*, 169.

¹²⁹ “In addition to “Exodus”, the book of “Revelation” was prohibited to be preached in Korean churches by Japanese ruler.” Seong-won Park, “Protestantism in China, Japan and Korea: Church and State, Gospel and Culture”, International Consultation on Protestantism in the Contemporary World, Siena, Italy, 13-14 February 1997, 6.

Also there is no doubt that many Christians, who have come under the direct influence of American missionaries, have learned something of the world situation and been seized with aspiration for the independence of their country. It is an undeniable fact that agitation has been started by these students and men, but it is wrong to think that they represent the Korean people.

After annexation by the Japanese, no one was allowed to organize a national scale society or association, except for a religious purpose.

2.3 Attitude of Missionaries

A. Clark's *History of the Church in Korea* is recognized as a representative work of Korean church history in English. However, we find that in it the MFIM was dealt with only as a relatively small sub-chapter¹³⁰ while the Great Revival Movement is discussed at length in a main chapter.¹³¹ General histories of the Korean church by Korean authors, on the other hand, normally highlight the MFIM with extensive discussion. This difference illustrates a general difference of perspective between the missionary-centered and the indigenous-centered historical viewpoint. Therefore, it is significant to reflect critically on the attitude of missionaries to the MFIM and Japanese rule.

Seong-won Park argues, "while the Korean Christians were struggling for their freedom, the missionaries tried to prevent the Korean churches and Christians from participating in the anti-Japanese struggles."¹³² Most of them believed that the Christian faith should be separated from the political matters.¹³³ They were also worried that the pietistic faith of the Korean Christians which they had cultivated might be transmuted. Instead of being in solidarity with struggling Koreans, the majority of them were supportive of the colonial ruler or neutral.¹³⁴ When an article criticising missionaries appeared in the *Japan Times*, M. Harris, a Methodist Bishop, wrote a rebuttal in the May 7th, 1907 issue of the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, a Japanese newspaper. He argued:

¹³⁰ A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 196-203

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 154-185

¹³² Seong-won Park, *Op. Cit.*, 10

¹³³ A. Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East*, 566-567.

¹³⁴ Only Prof. E. Mowry, Dr. F. Scofield, Dr. S. Maffet, Dr. G. McCune Rev. W. McKenzie, Rev. J. Thomas, Miss Davis and Miss Hocking out of 382 missionaries supported the MFIM. In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 411-414.

Our three leading missionaries (Johns, Scranton and Harris) were threatened to death after we rejected the Koreans' request for assistance in their campaign to oppose the Japanese protectorate of Korea... Please understand that missionaries are not the enemy of the Japanese people. Rather we, as the most faithful friends of Japan, work in concert to promote the well-being through Christian reconciliation between the Japanese and Korean people.... I would like to confess that I am the staunchest supporter of the resident-general's rule of Korea.

As a result, Sung-tae Kim argues, "Korean Christianity, which was under the leadership of missionaries and pro-missionary Koreans, was gradually driven to an ahistorical, depoliticized fundamentalist faith".¹³⁵

It is true, as Clark argues, that membership in the Korean church was greatly increased through the Great Revival Movement.¹³⁶ Korean Christians experienced the communion of the Holy Spirit. They repented of their wrongdoings; they confessed even their hostile feeling against the Japanese and some missionaries. However, it is highly important that they also believed and confessed that the fall of the nation was due to their sins.¹³⁷ Clark overlooks this important point in describing the Great Revival Movement solely in terms of a spiritual rebirth of the Korean people. From a Korean perspective, however, the connection between personal sin and the fate of nation was, for most Korean Christians, a reason to identify with the movement for national renewal and support the MFIM. As Bishop Welch recognized at the time, "They (missionaries) had not been consulted as to the inauguration of the movement (MFIM)."¹³⁸

However after the failure of the MFIM, as the missionaries sought "to protect the church"¹³⁹, the nature of Korean Christianity switched to a 'revival passion'.¹⁴⁰ Although the political

¹³⁵ Sung-tae Kim, "A Study of Attitudes of Missionaries on the Korean Independent Movement", *Journal of History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 6, 1997, 88-98.

¹³⁶ A. Clark, *Op. Cit.*, 176. However, G. Brown argues that the movement for nationhood, for independence, for self-respect was one of the major motives of church growth in Korea. G. Brown, "Why Has Christianity Grown Faster in Korea than in China", *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. 22, 1994, 83.

¹³⁷ See, Ji-yun Chang, *Si Il Ya Bang Sung Dae Gok* (是日也放聲大哭, Tears for Today), *Whansung Shinmoon*, 1905.

¹³⁸ N.B. Korean Christians had consulted with the missionaries in 1907 (*Shin Min Hoe*), but they did not in 1919 (MFIM). H. Welch, "The Last Ten Years in Korea", *IRM*, vol. 20, 1922, 345; M. Harries, *Yomiuri Shinbun* (The Yomiuri), 7th May 1907.

¹³⁹ M. Harries, Report to the Quadrennial General Conference, the Journal of the 25th Delegated General Conference, 1908, 860; Quoted, Lak-joon Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910*, Seoul, Yonsei University Press, 1971, 438.

¹⁴⁰ "Some Christians who were suspected of political activity were kept out of holding office in the church, and in some cases were excommunicated." Seong-won Park, "Worship in the Presbyterian

implication of faith had been demonstrated through the MFIM, this aspect of Christian witness was weakened after the failure of the independence struggle, when the Korean church was put under heavy pressure by Japan to worship at the *Shinto* shrine.

2.4 Results

In-soo Kim summarizes the results of the MFIM under four headings: firstly, it linked the whole nation in the independence struggle; secondly, a government-in-exile was organized in Shanghai as a result of the MFIM; thirdly, the failure of MFIM allowed the Japanese to introduce a repressive “cultural policy”;¹⁴¹ and lastly, Christianity was considered as a patriotic religion among Koreans.¹⁴² While Kim accurately summarizes the results of the MFIM, there is need for a more balanced assessment of its impact in terms of the church and state issue.

The government-in-exile was important not only for the independence movement but also for Christian participation in the development of the modern state in Korea. As we have seen, the MFIM declaration stressed the liberation and equality of people in terms of biblical paradigms. In the spirit of the MFIM, the government-in-exile was organized and the Constitution of *Taehan Minguk* (大韓民國, Republic of Korea) articulated the principle that the sovereignty of the State resides in the people, not in the monarch. It is telling in this regard that Christians filled seven of the eight government-in-exile posts, including the presidency,¹⁴³ and that five of these Christians were from Northern Korea.¹⁴⁴

However, the establishment of the government-in-exile led to a critical assessment of the MFIM. It was argued that the MFIM methodology of peaceful resistance and appeal to foreign countries failed to achieve the goal of independence. The Christian leaders of the MFIM were vulnerable to criticism from both nationalists and Communists, who demanded a more radical independence movement.

Church in Korea”, 72.

¹⁴¹ The imperial “cultural policy” encouraged modern educational and cultural development in Korea. It used a reconciliation gesture to Koreans. The new governor, Saito relaxed restrictions on Koreans’ freedom of speech and assembly to organize a variety of nationalist and Communist groups. B. Commings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 156.

¹⁴² In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 414-419.

¹⁴³ “Korea Ready to Become Christian”, *The Missionary Review of the World*, July 1919, 551.

¹⁴⁴ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 415.

Christians responded to this criticism in two ways. Firstly, there was the second revival movement, which emphasized a transcendental mysticism that combined healing and miracle experience.¹⁴⁵ The first revival movement of 1907 had been led by missionaries, but the second was led by indigenous leaders with the support of the missionaries. Positively, the second movement played a healing role for the defeated and wounded heart of the Korean people in the aftermath of the MFIM. However, it also caused the “anti-Christianity movement” of Communists during the 1920s because the revival movement advocated the “de-politization” of Christianity, emphasizing the eternal “other-world” rather than the suffering colonized fatherland.

Secondly, most Christian independence leaders aligned themselves with Korean nationalists.¹⁴⁶ This resulted in a shift of emphasis from Christianity in Northern Korea being ‘the church for the *minjung*’ to a new emphasis as ‘the church for the fatherland’.

As a result of the MFIM, Korean people began to think that Christianity could become one of their own religions, and the Protestant churches in Korea started to grow dramatically. G. Brown reported that the number of new members of the Protestant church per year after the MFIM greatly exceeded that of the three years before the MFIM came into existence.¹⁴⁷

3. Christianity and Marxism: Two Hopes for Independence

Through the MFIM, Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea emerged as a sign of hope for national independence. In the same period, Communism was introduced to Korea through the ‘Northern Route’ from China and Russia.¹⁴⁸ As Protestant Christianity was attractive to the suffering Korean people, Communism was also rapidly spreading among them. Both of them were considered as two ideological hopes for national independence and the modernization of Korea among the *minjung*.

¹⁴⁵ IKCH ed., *A History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 2, 41.

¹⁴⁶ Man-yol Lee, “The March First Independence Movement and Christianity”, 8-9.

¹⁴⁷ G. Brown, *Mission to Korea*, Seoul, Presbyterian Church of Korea Press, 1962, 115.

¹⁴⁸ Concerning the history of Communism in Korea, see, Dae-sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964; R. Scalapino and C. Lee, *Communism in Korea*, vol. 2, Berkley, University of California Press, 1972.

Although Christianity and Marxism did not intend to collide at the first, ideological competition arose between them after the failure of the MFIM. The way in which Christianity and Marxism encountered each other in colonial Korea was a forerunner of the interface that would follow between them in North Korea, after the liberation.

3.1 The 'Anti-Christianity Movement' and Response of Christianity

After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, General Dong-hui Lee,¹⁴⁹ who had been the evangelist of the missionary Grison, in Northern Korea, organized the Korean Socialist Party in Khabarovsk,¹⁵⁰ in Russia, in 1918. He met Lenin and was impressed by the Russian leader's anti-imperialism. As he converted to Christianity in the belief that "Christ will save Korea", he accepted Marxism as an ideology of national liberation.¹⁵¹ However, he did not give up his Christian faith. Rather, he tried to integrate the two in the struggle for independence.¹⁵² In 1920, Lee was appointed the prime minister of the government-in-exile in Shanghai and met other Korean Communists in China. They organized the Korean Communist Party. As Dong-kun Hong points out, "most leaders of the early Korean Communist Party in China were Christians".¹⁵³

In this early history of Communism in Korea, two things are clear: firstly, there was no major conflict between Christian and Communist at this stage; secondly, some Northern Korean Christians like Lee were attracted to the Marx's ideas on social equality and to Lennin's anti-imperialism.

However, in the mid-1920s, there were radical changes both in Christianity and Marxism in Korea. As a result of the second revival movement, the majority of Christians became progressively de-politized. At the same time, the emergent Chosun Communist Party in Korea (1925), espoused a very dogmatic interpretation of Communism.¹⁵⁴ Most Communists in this

¹⁴⁹ See, Kyu-moo Han, "Lee Dong-hui and his Christian Socialism", in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Christianity and Socialism under Japanese Rule*, Seoul, IKCH, 1992, 174.

¹⁵⁰ There were many Korean political refugees under Japanese rule. Khabarovsk was also an important base of Kim Il-Sung's guerrilla army. Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung; The North Korean Leader*, New York, Colombia University Press, 1988, 49.

¹⁵¹ Kyu-moo Han, *Op. Cit.*, 181.

¹⁵² Dong-kun Hong, "Christian Socialists in Chosun", in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Christianity and Socialism under Japanese Rule*, 162.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ B. Commings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 159.

period were atheists and took the Marxist view that “religion is the opium of the people.” This reflected the anti-Christianity emphasis of Communism in China.¹⁵⁵

As a result, a serious anti-Christianity movement was organized from 1924 onwards. On the occasion of the assembly meeting of Seoul Communist Youth Association (*Kyungsung Shinhung Chungnyun Dongmaeng Hoe*), the delegates officially announced their anti-Christian position.¹⁵⁶ In 1925, the Young Communists organized a program of anti-Christianity lectures throughout the whole year. The National Conference of Sunday School Leaders in Korea, Seoul, 22nd-28th October 1925, was confronted by a counter-conference, the Communist Conference on Anti-Christianity.¹⁵⁷ Amidst a heightening of tensions between Christians and Communists, the latter announced 25th December as the “Anti-Christian Day”.¹⁵⁸

As a result of this polarization, most Christians, already influenced by the non-political emphasis of American missionary Christianity, opposed Communism and ignored its challenge to Christianity. Others, as Kwon-jung Kim points out, engaged with the Communist challenge by developing their own criticism of the trend to de-politicize Christianity and arguing for a Christian Socialism that could interface with Marxism.¹⁵⁹ Korean Christianity which had been so powerfully united in the MFIM movement was now beginning to be divided by different opinions concerning political participation, and the ideological attack of Communists.

3.2 Christian Socialists in Northern Korea

Just as Protestant Christianity in the 19th century, Marxism now proved very attractive to the northern *minjung*. It is not unimportant that most Christian Socialists during the 1920s were Northern Koreans. Dong-hui Lee, from Northern Korea, should be remembered as the first

¹⁵⁵ Myung-sook Kang, “The Anti-Christianity Movement in China and Socialist Movement in colonial Chosun in the 1920s”, *Journal of History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 7, 1998, 143-171.

¹⁵⁶ IKCH ed., *A History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 2, 48.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁵⁸ *Gaebyuk*, (New Heaven), vol. 63, 1945, 40.

¹⁵⁹ Kwon-jung Kim, “Understanding of Christians on Socialism in Korea, 1920-1930”, *Journal of History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 5, 1996, 96-98.

Christian Socialist in Korea. However, the development of Christian Socialism largely depended on the contribution of Rev. Chang-joon Kim,¹⁶⁰ also from Northern Korea.

Kim was one of the 33 national leaders of the MFIM during the 1910s. After his imprisonment (1919-1922), he argued for an interface between Korean Christianity and Korean Communism, promoting the idea of “Jesus-Socialism”. Kim took the view that “Marxism is a social science and uses a scientific methodology for analyzing social phenomena,”¹⁶¹ whereas Christianity has a transcendental epistemology which is based in faith in God and deals with issues such as ‘sin and death’, ‘conscience’ and ‘soul’ etc. These two different ways of thinking are liable to collide and cause tensions. On the other hand, “there is a necessity of interface for mutual correspondence”.¹⁶² Each should be aware of the different role of other. Marxism should recognize the positive role of religion, while Christianity should listen to Marxist criticism. Marxism could contribute to socio-historical development, especially, through its focus on the oppressed, while Christianity can tackle the ontological dilemma of what it means to be human.

¹⁶⁰ Here is a summary of chronology of Kim’s life.

- 1890: Born in Pyungnam, North Korea.
- 1907: Baptized by Rev. John Moore.
- 1913: Graduated the Sungsil University in Pyongyang (BA).
- 1915: Graduated the Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo.
- 1917: Graduated the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul (BD).
- 1919: Led the MFIM as one of 33 national leaders.
- 1921: Released after two and half years imprisonment.
- 1922: Ordained as a Methodist minister.
- 1926: Graduated the North Western University in Chicago (BA, MA).
- 1927: Appointed as a part-time lecturer in the Methodist Seminary.
- 1931: Elected as an honorary officer of the Methodist church and YMCA.
- 1933: Appointed as a professor in the Methodist Seminary
- 1935: Served as a short-term missionary in Manchuria
- 1940: Opposed the *Shinto* worship and disappeared. Lost his son and his student.
- 1947: Joined the NDF and organized the CDA.
- 1948: Moved to North Korea.
- 1953-1958: Participated the CPC conferences.
- 1957: Elected a vice-chairperson of the Supreme National Confederal Assembly in North Korea
- 1959: Died from cerebral hemorrhage

Jooseop Keum, “Across the River of Division: A Re-evaluation of the Life and Thought of Chang-Joon Kim (1890-1959) from a Post-Cold War Perspective,” unpublished research paper, University of Edinburgh, 2000.

¹⁶¹ Chang-joon Kim, “Marxism and Christianity,” *Sinhak Seikye*, (The Theological World), vol.17, 1932, 53.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 54

In addition to Kim, Rev. Dae-wi Lee was another important Christian Socialist in Northern Korea.¹⁶³ He was a leader of the *Shin Min Hoe* and became a political refugee in China. He studied politics in Beijing University where he was influenced by Communism. He became deeply involved in the YMCA in Korea and in China where a strong argument on Christian socialism was taking place in the 1920s. He had a similar ideas to those of Kim, who was a close friend. He understood that Marxism provided an idea of social reformation, especially for peasants and workers, and maintained that national independence should be accompanied with a social reformation. Christianity needed to accept this idea to realize the Kingdom of God.¹⁶⁴

Even though those three representative Christian socialists in Northern Korea were highly respected within the Korean church, due to their leadership of the independence movement and their highly educated background,¹⁶⁵ their arguments were largely ignored by their fellow Korean Christians. This was partly the consequence of the aggressive attitude of Communists toward Christianity at this time. But in part it was also due to the fact that they expressed their ideas of Christian Socialism in rather theoretical terms, through articles in theological journals, and failed to develop practical programs for the interface of their two ideological hopes for the independence.

3.3 *Shin Gan Hoe*: The First United Front

Evidence of this failure on the part of the Christian socialists is found in the fact that the first United Front for independence was forged between Korean nationalists, most of whom were Christians, and Korean Communists, rather than between Communists and Christian socialists.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, by the end of the 1920s, Korean Communists had changed their attitude to Christianity in so far as it was identifiable with nationalism, just as in China a United Front was formed between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists in the struggle against colonialism.

¹⁶³ See, Hyun-suk Chae, "Life and Work of Lee Dae-wi", in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Christianity and Socialism under the Japanese Rule*, Seoul, IKCH, 1992, 253-265.

¹⁶⁴ Dae-wi Lee, "Socialism and Christian Thought", *Chungnyun* (The Journal of YMCA), vol. 3, No. 7, 1923, 51-62.

¹⁶⁵ Kim studied at the North Western University and Lee studied at the Yale and Colombia University. Kim was a professor in theology at the Methodist Theological Seminary and Lee was at the Kunkook University.

¹⁶⁶ Kwon-jung Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 102.

In this new situation, a secret political front for independence, the *Shin Gan Hoe* (新幹會) or 'New Branch' Association was established in 1927.¹⁶⁷ Christians numbered 12 of the 51 central committee members,¹⁶⁸ and 255 ordained ministers were included in the full membership in 1928.¹⁶⁹ There were 143 local branches, 39,000 memberships in 1929. Once again the *Shin Gan Hoe* was especially strong in Northern Korea, especially the Hamkyung province, where local labor involved in the mining industry was heavily exploited by the Japanese.¹⁷⁰

However, Japanese authorities were astonished by the unity of the two major forces of the independence movement; Christian nationalists and Communists. From 1928, the Japanese police massively arrested the members of the *Shin Gan Hoe*, and most of the arrested were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Internally the movement was divided by serious conflicts over organization and strategy which tended to polarize nationalists and Communists.¹⁷¹ For these reasons, the first experiment at creating a United Front in Korea was unsuccessful, and the *Shin Gan Hoe* ceased to exist in the early 1930s.

The failure of the *Shin Gan Hoe* impeded further attempts at cooperation between Christian nationalists and Communists.

4. Idolatry and Identity, 1930-1945

From about 1930, the political situation in Japan, Korea and East Asia dramatically changed. The ultra-conservative military wing of the Japanese political group created the puppet kingdom of Manchukuo, in Manchuria (1932),¹⁷² with a descendant of the last Emperor of

¹⁶⁷ Concerning the *Shin Gan Hoe*, see, Chi-hoon Cho ed., *Shin Gan Hoe Yungu*, (A Study of *Shin Gan Hoe*), Seoul, Dongnyuk, 1983.

¹⁶⁸ Kwon-jung Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 102.

¹⁶⁹ Chi-hoon Cho ed., *Op. Cit.*, 1983, 86.

¹⁷⁰ Kyung-sik Park, "National Liberation Movement and National United Front in Korea", in Chi-hoon Cho ed., *Op. Cit.*, 36-37.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 45-48.

¹⁷² "On the night of September 18, 1931, hostilities between Japanese and Chinese soldiers broke out after an explosion on the South Manchurian Railway near Mukden. It occurred without the sanction or knowledge of the official government in Tokyo. However, this "Manchurian incident" was an epoch-making event in the history of modern Japan, eventually leading to another disastrous world war. As a result of the incident, Japanese troops soon occupied the whole of the northern region of China, and on March 1, 1932, the state of Manchukuo was born." Wi-jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar*,

China as nominal ruler. The militarists provoked the Sino-Japanese war (1937) and the Pacific war (1941), propagating the idea that this was a Holy War aiming at the ‘Co-Prosperty Sphere of Great Eastern Asia’.

From 1930-1945, Korea and the Korean church faced the most menacing crises of their national and Christian identity as a result of the assimilation policy of the Japanese colonial government. Its aim was to eradicate Korean culture and history, and annihilate the Korean identity. In the remainder of this chapter, we will examine this Japanization policy and the response of the Protestant church in Northern Korea.

4.1 Japanization Policy and National Identity

The international and domestic situation in Japan after the outbreak of the “Machurian incident” resulted in an intensification of the policy of “Japanization” in Korea.¹⁷³ This policy was called the *Whang Guk Shin Min Wha* (皇國臣民化), literally meaning “transforming Koreans into a loyal vassal people of the Empire”. The establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo placed Korea in a significantly new position of strategic value for the defense of the Japanese Empire. As Sung-gun Kim has argued, “Japan needed not only the material resources and strategic position of Korean peninsula but also the ‘native manpower’ for conscription. Thus, the need for the loyalty and devotion of the Korean people to the Empire became more urgent than ever before.”¹⁷⁴ Japanese ultra nationalists forced the Korean people into becoming second-class Japanese who would devote themselves to the Holy War.

The “Japanization” policy strengthened the *Nae Sun Il Che* (內鮮一體) policy of “unity between Korea and Japan”. The whole history of Korea was re-written from this perspective to assert the historical characteristics of unity between the two states.¹⁷⁵ This revisionist interpretation of history involved a series of cultural and religious programs to remove Korean national identity.

61-62.

¹⁷³ Wi-jo Kang, “The Japanese Government and Religions of Korea”, PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1966, 146.

¹⁷⁴ Sung-gun Kim, “The Shinto Shrine Issue in Korean Christianity under Japanese Colonialism”, *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 39, 1997, 504.

¹⁷⁵ See, B. Commings, *Korean Place in the Sun*, 163-184.

4.1.1 *Chang Ci Gae Myung* (Changing to Japanese Names)

After the MFIM, Japan changed its governing style in Korea. The new governor, Saito Makoto, realized that a high-handed policy would provoke mass resistance among the Korean people, especially the Protestant Christians. Therefore, he developed the so-called “Cultural Governing Policy” which encouraged education and modernization. However, with the beginning of the ultra-conservative militarism in Japan, General Ugaki Kazunari was appointed Korea’s governor-general. He was an advocate of the Japanization policy in Korea. Ugaki stated that the *Nae Sun Il Che* does not mean mixing two cultures but forming a complete whole.¹⁷⁶ He even insisted that Koreans and Japanese have the same blood and ancestors (同祖同根). With this justification, he ordered the *Chang Ci Gae Myung* (創氏改名)¹⁷⁷ which required all Koreans to change their names. This was an indelible disgrace to Koreans and a fundamental menace to Korean identity, which traditionally stressed the honor of family and of the family name in East Asian culture.

4.1.2 *Dong Bang Yo Bae* (Bowling to the East)

The second program for the Japanization policy was the *Dong Bang Yo Bae* (東方遙拜) or “Bowling to the East”. This introduced *Shinto* ritualism into Korea, although the Japanese colonial government argued that it was a patriotic, not a religious, ceremony which should therefore be conducted in all public sectors. Every public organization - such as school, company, offices, hospitals, and trade unions - had to start everyday of life by bowing to the East, where the Japanese Emperor (*Denno*) lived. It was also compulsory to recite the *Whang Guk Shin Min Seo Sa* (皇國臣民誓詞), the Pledge of Vassals of the Empire, on this occasion.¹⁷⁸

Suk-hee Han has argued that the *Dong Bang Yo Bae* was intended as a first step in the policy of enforcing *Shinto* worship.¹⁷⁹ In September 1932, the mission schools in Pyongyang were

¹⁷⁶ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 496.

¹⁷⁷ In 1940, every Korean was ordered to change their name to Japanese name to celebrate 2,600 years of Japanese history. S. Han, *Ilje Tongchi was Ilbon Kidokyo*, (Japanese Rule and Japanese Christianity), Seoul, Somangsa, 255.

¹⁷⁸ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 495.

¹⁷⁹ See, Suk-hee Han, *Japanese Occupation and Religious Policy on Korea*, Seoul, Christian Literature Press, 1990, 161-169.

asked to participate in the *Shinto* worship in memory of the Japanese soldiers who lost their lives in the Manchuria incident. However, the schools refused on religious grounds. This rejection provoked a confrontation between the Presbyterian churches in Northern Korea and the Japanese colonial government. Consequently, the government developed a simplified patriotic national ceremony, the *Dong Bang Yo Bae*, and at the end of 1932 ordered all schools and organizations to participate in this patriotic ceremony.

4.1.3 Japanese Language Policy and Korean Bible

When Ugaki was appointed as governor of Korea, he also prohibited the teaching of Korean language and history in schools, in favor of Japanese language and history. He even ordered officials to use only Japanese in public offices.¹⁸⁰

The church was the only place where Korean, *Hangul*, could be used because it was the language of the Bible. As a result, non-Christians as well as Christians sent their children to Sunday School to learn the *Hangul*. In the Sunday School, Christian teachers taught their pupils how to read the Bible and write prayers in Korean. They were also able to refer to Korean history when treating the history of Israel. When people read the story of the Exodus of the Hebrews they clapped, and prayed for a similar event in Korea.¹⁸¹ It was for this reason that the Japanese prohibited the preaching of the Exodus from the Korean pulpit.

Thus, the Christian mission schools in Northern Korea functioned as effective institutions for the preservation of national identity. There were 565 mission schools (71%) in Northern Korea out of 801 mission schools all. These 801 represented 90% of all schools in Korea. Interestingly, 53 mission schools in Pyongan province alone were established by Christian nationalists such as Ahn Chang-ho and Lee Sung-hun, the former *Shin Min Hoe* leaders. By contrast, not a single school was established by Korean Christians in Southern Korea.¹⁸² The teachers and students arrested during the MFIM were mostly from these 53 schools.¹⁸³ Under the Japanization policy, it was these schools that refused to follow the order of Ugaki and

¹⁸⁰ Concerning Japanese language policy, see, Man-yol Lee, *The Cultural History of Christian Movement in Korea*, 450-461.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 450.

¹⁸² The list of schools is from In-soo Son, *The Modern History of Education in Korea*, Seoul, Yonsei University Press, 1971, 39.

¹⁸³ IKCH ed., *Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of Church in North Korea), 328.

continued to teach Korean language and history, and to worship in Korean using the vernacular bible. Eventually they were forced to close from 1937-1938 due to their opposition to the enforcement of *Shinto* worship.

4.2 *Shintoism* and Christian Identity

The “Japanization” policy targeted especially Protestant Christianity and *Tonghak* in the religious field, because both of them had been the religious forces leading resistance to Japanese rule in Korea. Wi-jo Kang criticizes most traditional religions in Korea (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shamanism) for enjoying the protection of the colonial authorities.¹⁸⁴ By contrast, Protestant Christianity and *Tonghak* suffered from Japanese oppression “because of (their) strong nationalist orientation and messianism.”¹⁸⁵ We can therefore see why, in religious Japanization policy, *Shintoism* targeted both of them. We will now examine *Shintoism* and the response of Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea in this sub-chapter.

4.2.1 *Shinto*

Shinto is a Japanese indigenous religion, which worships the Sun-goddess (*Amaterasu-omikami*) and the spirits of the departed emperors. From 1868 on, state *Shinto*, which was restored by the *Meiji* (明治) government demands that the living emperor also be worshipped as an incarnate god. The worship includes the spirits of national heroes who sacrificed their lives for the nation.¹⁸⁶

Shinto begins with mythological stories about the origin of the world. In the beginning the greatest deity, Mid-Sky-Master, and other primeval deities appear by name, but mythology does not attribute any creative activities to them. In old *Shinto*, there are many nature-gods, and among them the Sun-goddess is the highest, the center of the mythological thought of the Japanese people.¹⁸⁷ In the 4th Century, when the Yamado clan assumed power, *Shinto* became

¹⁸⁴ Wi-jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar*, 63.

¹⁸⁵ Sung-tae Kim, “The *Shinto* Shrine Issue in Korean Christianity under Japanese Colonialism”, *Op. Cit.*, 505.

¹⁸⁶ For a general understanding of *Shintoism*, see, W. G. Aston, *Shinto: The Way of the Gods*, London, Longmans, 1905; “The Shinto Shrines: A Problem Confronting the Church”, *IRM*, vol. 29, 1940, 161-188; *CTC Bulletin*, vol. 3, No.3, Hong Kong, CCA, 1982.

¹⁸⁷ Keun-sam Lee, *The Christian Confrontation with Shinto Nationalism*, Philadelphia, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1996, ix.

de facto a national religion, the Sun-goddess being presented as the ancestress of the ruling family.¹⁸⁸ Thereafter, the emperors (*Mikado* or *Denno*) claimed to be the direct descendants and lineal successors of the Sun-goddess. *Shintoism* also has some strong syncretistic features with borrowings from Buddhism and Confucianism.¹⁸⁹

Under the *Meiji* emperors, from 1868 onwards, *Shinto* became more than ever a political religion. The *Meiji* government set up the old *Shinto* as the state religion, giving it its modern form in order to make the authority of the emperor (*Denno*) sacred, and to encourage national unity under his authority.¹⁹⁰ When this revival was unsuccessful, the *Meiji* government separated *Shinto* into two parts, State *Shinto* and Religious *Shinto*, claiming that State *Shinto* is not a religious but a patriotic ideology. In this way, the *Meiji* government legitimized its authority.¹⁹¹ “The State Shinto was claimed as a super religion over all other religions, and the core of State *Shinto* is worship of emperors who are deified under the nimbus of the Sun-goddess”.¹⁹²

4.2.2 *Shinto* Shrine Worship and the Korean Church

Emperor worship based on State *Shinto* led to the belief that the emperor was, by his divine authority, the ruler of the universe. Japan, therefore, had a sacred mission. The expansionism of the *Meiji* imperial government was therefore divinely inspired, and its divine mission was pursued, if necessary by military force, through Holy War. It should be noted that this imperial expansionism received strong support from an amalgam of forces, ultra nationalist groups based on *Shinto* ideology, capitalist plutocracy and bellicose militarists.¹⁹³ The Japanese historian, K. Masahiko, points out, “According to the logic of the police and prosecutors who interrogated the Christians refusing Shrine worship, it was demonstrated that

¹⁸⁸ D. Brown, *A Guide to Religions*, London, SPCK, 1983, 54; Concerning the historical development of *Shintoism*, see, T. Masahiro, “The Dual Structure of the Emperor System”, *CTC Bulletin*, vol. 13, 1982, 3-7.

¹⁸⁹ Seong-won Park, *Op. Cit.*, 114.

¹⁹⁰ Keun-sam Lee, *Op. Cit.*, ix.

¹⁹¹ See, the following Article One and Two of the *Meiji* Constitution. “The authority of the reign of Japanese emperor shall be inherited by the line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal.” “The emperor is sacred and inviolable”. Quoted from, *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹² Seong-won Park, *Op. Cit.*, 115.

¹⁹³ K. Masahiko, *A History of Japanese Persecution upon Korean Churches*, Seoul, Christian Literature Press, 1991, 35.

the Japanese colonial rule over Korea was a part of an expansionist policy based on Japanese emperor worship".¹⁹⁴

For this purpose, the Japanese colonial government established *Shinto* shrines all over Korea. The central *Shinto* shrine (*Chosun Shinkung*, 朝鮮神宮) was erected in 1925, and by 1945, 1,141 shrines had been set up in most of the villages throughout the country.¹⁹⁵ People, particularly students, were forced to attend the *Shinto* ceremony. By the 1930s the Korean churches were being pressed by the Japanese authorities to worship the *Shinto* Shrine (*Shin Sa Cham Bae*, 神社參拜).¹⁹⁶ The first pressure was put upon the schools run by the Protestant churches in Pyongyang on the occasion of the memorial ceremony for the victims of the Manchuria incident. However, three missionary presidents of the schools, and Korean nationalist presidents in the Korean-founded mission schools, refused to engage in *Shinto* worship on the grounds that this would violate God's commandment.

Japanese authorities in Pyongyang tried to persuade the Korean Christians that the worship which the government required was not religious, but patriotic. The Japanese even used a foreigner, Mr. Mcfee, the chief government official for the internal affairs of Pyongan province, to argue its case. Mcfee claimed that the fundamental idea differs from that of religion because the required worship was an expression of patriotism based on the moral virtues of the nation. Therefore, "all people, both from the standpoint of citizenship in the empire and from that of the education of the people of the empire, should yield obeisance".¹⁹⁷

However, G. McCune, who was president of Sungsil University in Pyongyang and highly respected among Protestant nationalists in Northern Korea,¹⁹⁸ theologically affirmed, "Since the *Shinto* shrine is the place where the spirit of the Sun-goddess and *Meiji* are enshrined, to bow to the shrine would be violating the God's commandment for me as a Christian".¹⁹⁹ He was finally forced to resign from his post, but his theological affirmation not only encouraged

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹⁵ The Chosun Government-General, *A Statistical Yearbook, Korea Situations, Korea Annals*; quoted from Sung-tae Kim ed., *Korean Church and Shinto Shrine Issue*, Seoul, IKCH, 1991, 210.

¹⁹⁶ IKCH ed., *A History of Korean Church*, vol.2, 289.

¹⁹⁷ D. Holtom, "State Shinto and Religion", *IRM*, vol. 26, 1938, 164.

¹⁹⁸ McCune was pointed as an instigator of the *Shin Min Hoe* by Japanese authorities. He was also banished from Korea due to his support for the MFIM. In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 372-373; 413-414; IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 290.

¹⁹⁹ "From McCune to C. B. Mcfee", 20th December 1935.

Protestant nationalists but also influenced other missionaries who were in a dilemma in Northern Korea. As a result, the *Sinsa Pul-Chambae Undong* (神社不參拜運動) or the non-Shrine Worship Movement started in the mission schools in Northern Korea. Japanese authorities feared that the spread of this movement could develop nationwide and create another MFIM. Therefore, the Japanese government-general decided to close most mission schools in Pyongyang in 1937, and appointed Japanese to all leadership positions. In 1938, the Presbyterian mission schools in Northern Korea finally came under the government-general, and the following year this policy was extended to all mission schools in Korea.²⁰⁰

Table 6) Distribution of Mission Schools in Northern Korea²⁰¹

Denomination	Presbyterian		Methodist		Catholic		Others	Buddhist	Total
Provinces	By Korean	By Missionary	By Korean	By Missionary	By Korean	By Missionary			
Hwanghae	Nil	133	Nil	37	5	4	4	Nil	183
South Pyongan	Nil	159	Nil	78	9	8	6	1	261
North Pyongan	53	42	Nil	9	1	Nil	16	Nil	121
South Hamkyung	Nil	16	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	16
North Hamkyung	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	403		124		30		26	1	584 (73%)
C.f. S. Korea	98		34		16		60	4	217 (27%)

In the end, the Japanese authorities began to enforce the *Shinto* worship on the churches. According to Sung-gon Kim, the Roman Catholic Church and Methodist Church, which were stronger in Southern Korea, agreed to participate in the worship, accepting the Japanese argument that it was a national patriotic ceremony.²⁰² The Methodist church, on 29th January 1936, the Superindependent Joo-sam Ryang (southern Methodist) agreed to comply with the Japanese governor-general.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ IKCH ed., *A History of Churches in North Korea*, 322-333.
²⁰¹ The numbers are from *Ibid.*, 322.
²⁰² According to Sung-gun Kim, the Vatican endorsed this position. In May 1936, the *Congregation of Propaganda Fide* affirmed that *Shinto* shrine worship was not a religious but patriotic ceremony. He claims that this was an expression of the close relationship between the Vatican and Japan, and is an evidence of the Korean Roman Catholic church’s “collaboration” with the Japanese colonial power. Sung-gun Kim, “Shinto Shrine Issue in Korean Christianity”, 512.
²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 514.

Sung-gun Kim maintains that Northern Methodists supported the Presbyterian non-Shrine Worship Movement, until they were forbidden to do so by the Methodist leadership in Southern Korea.²⁰⁴ He argues that Northern Methodists were more influenced by the theological stance of Korean Presbyterianism, which was marked by a “strict exclusivism” towards other faiths, while Korean Methodism and Roman Catholicism were more tolerant in this respect.²⁰⁵ It is true that conservative Presbyterian missionaries, with their emphasis on individual piety and separation between church and state, were adamantly opposed to *Denno* worship due to their religious conservativeness.

But the present author would argue that opposition to *Shinto* worship in the North was an expression of the socio-political characteristics of Northern Protestantism, more than of theological conservatism in respect of other faiths. This explains why the theologically-liberal Northern Methodists made common cause with the theologically-conservative Northern Presbyterians. Both were equally part of the non-Shrine Worship Movement that was opposed to Japanese colonialism and Japanization policy in particular. This was part of Northern Christianity’s identification with nationalism, not simply a theological option in respect of inter-religious relations.

The Japanese authorities increased their systematic pressure to the last remaining anti-Shinto force, the Presbyterian churches in Northern Korea. Two weeks before the 27th General Assembly meeting held on 9th September 1938 in Pyongyang, the chief of police ordered the missionaries to approve the Shinto worship. The police arrested the key delegates who would definitely be opposed. On the second day of the meeting at Seomunbak church, the church was surrounded by the Japanese soldiers and the 193 delegates were inspected by the 97 Japanese policemen. High-level police officers were seated at the front facing the commissioners.²⁰⁶ A prepared statement was read by the head of police in Pyongyang and submitted, voted and approved in what can only be described as a manipulated scenario.²⁰⁷ Some delegates protested against the unlawful procedure, but their protests were ignored by the police. Under this oppressive atmosphere, the agenda of worshipping the *Shinto* was

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 515-516.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 509-510.

²⁰⁶ Kyung-bae Min, *Hankuk Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of Korean Christian Church), Seoul, CLS, 1972, 323.

²⁰⁷ Seong-won Park, *Op. Cit.*, 119.

passed by force. As soon as the resolution was passed the moderator was brought to the shrine to bow down. In this way the Presbyterian Church also was forced to capitulate.

Despite the humiliating nature of this event, according to In-soo Kim Presbyterian opposition to *Shinto* worship continued in local congregations.²⁰⁸ This is where the strength of Northern Presbyterianism lay, and when the General Assembly was coerced into submission to the colonial power, as had occurred after the failure of the MFIM and again with the *Sinsa Pul-Chambae Undong*, local congregations continued in opposition.

4.2.3 Religious or Patriotic?

The key argument between the Japanese authorities and Presbyterians was the issue of whether *Shinto* shrine worship was a religious ritual or a patriotic ceremony. It had also been a burning issue for Christianity in Japan.²⁰⁹ The constant argument of the Japanese authorities was that it was not a religious act but an expression of patriotic loyalty to the empire. However, the text of the Japanese order to the 1938 General Assembly makes the issue ambiguous. It reads as follows:

Direction and facilities for promotion

- 1) To erect a tower for raising the national flag in the yard of churches.
- 2) To encourage churches to perform the salutation to the national flag and obeisance towards the East where the Emperor and Ise Shrine are located.
- 3) For the mission school students, the *Shinto* shrine worship is required as an obligation.
- 4) To instruct churches not to follow the solar calendar (but to follow the Emperor calendar).²¹⁰

A *Shinto* leader at this time affirmed that the worship was religious.

²⁰⁸ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 510-523.

²⁰⁹ T. Kiyoko divides Japanese Christians in relation to the issue of *Shinto* shrine worship as six categories; 1) Christians who will accept and place themselves under the religious ideas arising from the traditional emperor system, 2) co-existing with the emperor system, 3) persecuted by the system, 4) belief in the gradual abrogation of the Tenno system, 5) direct confrontation and absolute rejection of the Tenno system, and 6) not showing any interest. K. Ken-ichi, "The Imperial System and Multiple Discriminations", *CTC Bulletin*, vol 3, 1982, 9. Concerning the current arguments, see, *Japan Christian Activity News*, Tokyo, NCCJ, No. 663, 1989, 1-5; No. 664, 1-7; No. 665, 4-7; No. 713, 1995, 5-11.

²¹⁰ The Police Department of Government-General, *Choikeun Chosun Chian Sangwhang*, (A Recent Security Situation of Korea), Seoul, Japanese Government-General, 1939, 390-391.

To argue that the services of the shrine are non-religious is an irresponsible disregard of facts. The shrines are religious. They are real religion. They are perfect religion. Christianity and Buddhism are side movements in religion. They are incomplete religions.²¹¹

The ‘patriotic’ conception of *Shintoism* in Korea was invented for the Japanese policy, which was primarily a strategy for unifying Korea and Japan. The *Shinto* leader is making a different point - i.e. that Shrine worship cannot be defined as only patriotic since it is full of religious ritualism. W. N. Blair observed that the actual performance of the patriotic ceremony was full of religious *Shinto* practices.²¹² This argues that it is impossible to draw a distinction between patriotism and religion in *Shinto*. Thus, despite their attempts to distinguish the two as a colonial strategy in Korea, the Japanese were actually imposing a religio-political system on the Koreans. The Presbyterians recognized this, and opposed the imposition on both theological and socio-political grounds.

In fact, the Japanese militarists used their state religion, *Shintoism*, as the ideological means for justifying the colonial war and for demanding obedience of the people in the colony. This ideological intention clearly appeared in the argument of Genchi Kato, the best-known contributor to the modern *Shinto* revival. He wrote, “In Japan, the emperor is identical with *Ten* (Heaven) and *Totei* (Emperor in Heaven) among the Chinese or Jehovah among the Jews”.²¹³ In his argument, the emperor was deified in order that Japanese colonialism could claim the sacred purpose of creating the so-called “holy Co-Prosperity of Great Eastern Asia”. Therefore, we can conclude that *Shintoism* was an imperial religion justifying colonial war and *Pax-Japanese* in Asia.²¹⁴ Protestant churches in Northern Korea, especially the Presbyterian Church, resisted the worship to protect Christian identity as well as Korean identity.

²¹¹ Quoted from “The Shinto Shrines: A Problem Confronting the Church”, *IRM*, vol. 29, 1948, 165-166, which was published later on the issue. N.B., There is no author’s name.

²¹² W. Blair, *Gold in Korea*, 12.

²¹³ G. Kato, *Waga Kokutai to Shinto*, (Our National Structure and Shinto), Tokyo, 1919; cited, Holtom, *Op. Cit.*, 12.

²¹⁴ In this respect, the Japanese churches have struggled against *Dennoism* and *Shintoism* since the end of World War II. See, Terazono Yoshiki and E. Hamer, *Brennpunkte in Kirche und Theologie Japans: Beiträge und Dokumente*, Düsseldorf, Neukirchener Verlag, 1988.

4.3 *Sinsa Pul-Chambae Undong: status confessionis*

Refusal of worship at the Shinto shrine meant police detention, duress, threats of deprivation of livelihood, resignation from positions, beatings, ruthless torture and even martyrdom. S. A. Moffet reported that about 2,000 Presbyterians were arrested, 200 churches were closed, and 50 were martyred because of their refusal of the shrine worship.²¹⁵

Yong-bock Kim identifies this as “a situation of *status confessionis*” because it was “a matter of being faithful to God or denying God”.²¹⁶ The Northern Korean Protestant church faced the imperial power of Japan with its religious and absolute claims. What followed was a confrontation between the sovereignty of God and that of the Japanese Emperor. When this confessional affirmation rapidly spread, the Japanese authorities started to persecute the resisting Christians. The Pyongyang Theological Seminary and Sungsil Christian University established by the Presbyterians, the only two higher education institutions in Northern Korea, and other leading schools of the movement closed. The national youth and women association of the PCK were banned in 1938. From 1937-1941, all mission schools were closed and all missionaries, except Germans, were banished from Korea. Finally, in 1940, all Korean churches, which by this time numbered 27 denominations, were forcibly united as a synod of the Japanese church, *Kyodan* (The United Christ Church in Japan).²¹⁷

4.3.1 The First Commandment *vis-à-vis* Emperor Worship

The clearest reason for refusal, particularly among the Presbyterian Christians in Northern Korea, was that the *Shinto* shrine worship was idolatry, and was therefore a violation of the First Commandment. Dae-wi Lee, a Christian socialist in Northern Korea stated in his trial, “the worship at the shrine means idolatry which violates the Mosaic Ten Commandments”.²¹⁸

Martyr Rev. Yang-won Sohn from a Presbyterian church in Pyongyang gave a succinct statement of the theological position of the church. Arguing in the classic style of Reformed

²¹⁵ S. Moffet, *The Christians of Korea*, New York, Friendship Press, 1962, 75.

²¹⁶ Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung*, 171.

²¹⁷ IKCH ed., *A History of Church in Korea*, vol. 2, 331-338.

²¹⁸ Committee for Editing History of Independence Movement, *A Collection of Resources of the Independence Movement*, vol. 12, Seoul, Committee for Editing History of Independence Movement, 1977, 1143.

theology, he cited Scripture as the Word of God and the supreme authority over Christian doctrine, and continued.

All things were predestined by God. Truth written in Scripture is God's eternal truth. All Human beings should obey the Word of God. Jehovah God alone is the Creator and living God. Worship of Sun-goddess (*Amaterasu-omikami*) is idolatry. She may be ancestor-goddess of Japanese Imperial House, but Christians are the children of God and not hers. Therefore, Christians should not worship her. Shinto shrine (*Shinsa*) is a place where *Amaterasu-omikami*, the spirit of departed emperors, and national heroes are enshrined. Worship at the shrine, therefore, means committing idolatry against God's law.²¹⁹

It is clear that for Northern Presbyterians, the shrine worship meant disloyalty to God and disobedience to God's authoritative word in the Bible.

4.3.2 Sovereignty of God and Sovereignty of the Emperor

For Korean Christians Presbyterians, therefore, the issue of the shrine worship was a question of confession about which there could be no compromise.

Here is a series of questions posed by a Japanese authority interrogating a Korean Christian, and the answer the Christian made. The questionnaire was distributed by Japanese police in Pyongyang on the occasion of the 27th General Assembly meeting of the PCK, and the answers were given by the martyr, Elder Kwan-Joon Park to the Government-General.

Questionnaire

1. Who is higher, Jehovah God or *Amaterasu-omikami* (Sun-Goddess)?
2. Who is greater, Christ or *Denno* (the Emperor)?
3. Is *Denno* a sinner and shall be judged in the last day?²²⁰

In response, Park confessed his faith to God in his letter to the Government-General and chose the way of martyrdom.

Answers

1. Jehovah is the only true God.
2. He rules over all things in heaven and earth. Human history is under his providence.

²¹⁹ Keun-sam Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 179.

²²⁰ Hoon Choi, "A Study on Shinto Shrine Worship and the Renovation Movement", Sung-tae Kim ed., *Op. Cit.*, 122.

3. Those countries who serve God will be blessed, but those countries who serve not will perish.
4. It is sin against God to coerce Korean Christians to worship *Shinto* shrine.
5. Therefore, do not impose shrine worship upon Korean Christians.
6. Release the detained Korean Christians.
7. If Japan does not obey God's will, God will soon make Japan perish.
8. Let us test who is the true God, Jehovah or *Amaterasu-Omikami*.²²¹

This exemplifies the nature of the choice that Korean Christians were required to make between the Sovereignty of God and Sovereignty of the Emperor. Korean Christians, especially northern Presbyterian, chose resistance against absolutism and totalitarianism based upon an eschatological understanding on the Sovereignty of God. They believed that God will liberate Korea, like Israel, from the hand of the Japanese Pharaoh, *Denno*, in his time (*kiros*).

Park points out that for the same reason, the Japanese authorities forbade Korean Christians to talk or preach the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ.²²² Martyr Shon, whom we have already quoted, also discussed Christ's Second Coming with his inquisitor.

Police: Let us suppose Christ will return as you believe. How will he be able to destroy Japan which is well equipped with modern military arms? What will be the means of destruction?

Sohn: Yes, Jesus will return one day with his power, but without military weapons. Weapons are for the use of human beings, but when there is no one who intends to use weapons it is useless power. When, through Christian evangelization, the Christian church is increased and many more become the children of God, it is not necessary to fight with weapons. Further, by Christ's power, the Japanese national structure based on *Shinto* mythical faith will be changed.²²³

4.3.3 Peace of God and War of the Emperor

Shintoism is a religion, which justifies colonial war as Holy War and heroic death for the empire as sacred devotion. This is the religious background that led Japanese *Kami-Kaze* pilots to sacrifice their lives in the Pacific War, by using their aircraft as missiles to attack American warships. It was the way that Japanese authorities justified their conscription of about two million Koreans as soldiers, workers and 'comfort women',²²⁴ for the so-called

²²¹ Yang-sun Kim, *Hankuk Kidokyosa Yun Ku*, (A Study of History of the Korean Church), Seoul, Christian Literature Press, 1971, 35.

²²² Seong-won Park, *Op. Cit.*, 129.

²²³ Protocol on Yang-won Sohn, Kwangju District Court, 1941.

²²⁴ The 'comfort women' means Korean girls who were used as sexual slaves of Japanese soldiers during the Pacific War. Japanese authorities conscripted by force more than two hundred thousand

Holy War.²²⁵ It was against this *Shinto* doctrine of Holy War that the Korean Christians, especially Presbyterians, were challenged to proclaim an entirely different understanding of the Peace of God.

Rev. Sun-ju Kil, who was one of the 33 national leaders of MFIM, from a Presbyterian church in Pyongyang stated an apocalyptic theological position against the *Shinto* doctrine of Holy War. He argued:

As evidenced by the wars, a people shall rise to conquer other people; and nation will rise against the nation. All people hate war and demand peace. They call for peace among the nations as well as among peoples. They declare that war is evil and peace is the only way building paradise... They (Japanese) have guns and swords in their hands. They assert the peace of the world while hiding guns behind their slogan.²²⁶

He understood that the non-Shrine Worship Movement, as *status confessionis*, was not merely an anti-colonial struggle for protecting the religious and national identity of Korea. He argued that the anti-Japanese movement should be understood theologically within the eschatological vision of the Book of Revelation, in which the righteous struggle for justice defeats the unrighteous use of war, and brings about the eternal peace of God which he wished for Korea.

This Christian understanding was a serious challenge to the *Shinto* doctrine of Holy War. The Japanese government asserted that the Holy War was the good news for the *minjung* for constructing the 'Co-Prosperity of Great Eastern Asia'. However, any news must be judged by the people, the receivers of news, who will decide whether it is good or bad. For the northern *minjung*, the war of the Emperor was the bad news and the peace of God was the Good News.

The paradigm of opposition between church and state that had developed in Northern Korea now led to the introduction of an the alternative Christian theology of peace in direct opposition to the *Shinto* theology of war.

Korean unmarried young women as sexual partners of Japanese soldiers. The conscription of the 'comfort women' focused on mission school students. For details, see, Jung-sun Noh, *Liberating God for Minjung*, Seoul, Hanul Academy, 1994, 45-46.

²²⁵ Ki-back Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 448-449.

²²⁶ Quoted from, WARC ed., *Testimonies of Faith in Korea*, Geneva, WARC, 1989, 104.

Conclusion to Part One

What was unique in northern Protestantism from 1892 to 1945 was its engagement with the socio-political context of the northern *minjung*. Through this articulation, Protestant Christianity created a hope for social reformation in the late *Chosun* period, and for national independence during Japanese rule.

The purpose of Part One of this thesis has been to give a comprehensive account of the development of Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea, with special reference to the issue of church and state, before the partition of Korean peninsula. The argument has been that the development of the oppositional paradigm of church-state relationship during this period decisively influenced the growth of the churches in Northern Korea among the northern *minjung*.

Protestantism came through the 'northern route' into Korea. The northern *minjung*, who had a strong antipathy to the southern-centered political power and the discriminatory social structure of the Chosun Dynasty, accepted Protestant Christianity as an alternative religion which could provide a new hope for social equality. Therefore, the Protestant church in Northern Korea developed as a 'church for the *minjung*'. This characteristic was developed as an idea of social reformation which stressed a polity of the people, not that of the monarch.

When Korea was occupied by Japan, Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea resisted Japanese rule and organized the MFIM. Through this process, the church-state relations in Northern Korea were shaped as a paradigm of opposition. This resulted in persecution of the church by the state, in a manner reminiscent of the early church in the Graeco-Roman empire.

This oppositional paradigm was undergirded theologically by resistance against *Shinto* Shrine worship. This was understood as an issue of *status confessionis*. Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea first got into conflict with the state over issues of social reformation and national independence, then collided with Japanese state on the fundamental question of the confession, giving only to God the worship that God is due.

In its collision with the tyrannies of the Chosun monarchy and the Japanese colonial state, Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea was highly respected by the *minjung* as a movement

that sought equality among all the people, independence of the fatherland and the development of both national and Christian identity. From the triangular perspective of church, *minjung* and state, the church-state relations in Northern Korea before the partition can be summarized as a *minjung*-centered paradigm of opposition. Indeed, this was one of the major causes of Christianity's success in Northern Korea.

Part Two

Iron Curtain and the Isolation of the Churches:

The Christian Ideological Struggle with Communism in North Korea after the Partition of the Korean Peninsula, 1945-1972

Introduction

The dialogue between faith and ideology in mission is not an unnecessary intellectual practice; it is not merely a political agenda that demands sensitive handling. Rather the issue of faith and ideology presents an opportunity to witness to a holistic mission because God does not give us partial salvation.¹ Especially, in a place where different ideologies seriously confront each other, God calls his/her churches to witness to God's mission there. However, the dialogue does not mean a compromising accommodation with ideology or an imprisonment within it.

Korea's liberation from Japanese occupation was suddenly changed into partition by the arrival of the Cold War order. The Korean peninsula was liberated after thirty-six years of Japanese colonial occupation on 15th August 1945. However, the peninsula was divided along the 38th Parallel due to a secret agreement made by the USA and the USSR as part of the Yalta Treaty, which was drawn up just before the liberation.² The territorial division brought about a division in the areas of culture, family, politics, economy and even religions. Behind these divisions, ideologies served as the "emperor's new clothes"³ to justify two divided Koreas. In the North, Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese guerilla army, supported by Soviet troops, introduced Communism; while in the South, the U.S. Army established a military government based on capitalism. Thus, from the partition of the Korean peninsula, Korea has been a battlefield of two ideologies.

¹ The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) recently affirmed that the dialogue between faith and ideology is one of the important theological agenda in Asia. See, Report of the Consultation on Ideology, Faith and People's Movement, Faith, Mission and Unity Program, CCA, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 8-11 December 2000.

² See, B. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1981, 109-110.

³ D. B. Forrester suggests that the theologian's task is to cry out "but the emperor's got no clothes". D. B. Forrester, "Mission in the Public Square: Christian Political Discourse as Public Confession", unpublished paper, 1999, 17.

The partition also caused division between churches. As this division proceeded, the ideological choice of churches became an unyielding belief system, which often seemed stronger than their faith. The churches even stood in the frontline of the ideological struggle. Because of this, when the Cold War developed into a real war, the majority of Christians in North Korea fled to the South due to their ideological choice. The remnant Christians in the North nevertheless continued to struggle with Communism in the post-Korean War context.

The aim of Part Two of this thesis is to examine the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea after the partition of Korean peninsula, with special reference to the issue of faith and ideology, 1945-1972. It is important to study this history through the filter of the Christian ideological struggle because the fate of the churches in North Korea in this period mainly depended on this issue. We will explore the story of churches captured in ideology between the Cold War and real war. It is of interest to research how the churches agonized, suffered, struggled and witnessed in societies that were ideologically divided. If there were different responses to this context, what were they? And how can we historically evaluate them? And from what academic bases? Through the study of such questions, we hope to answer the question of why the churches in North Korea were discriminated against, or persecuted up to 1972, and thus recover the forgotten history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea.

It will be argued that it has been the issue of faith and ideology that decisively influenced the church-state relationship in North Korea, causing discrimination by the state against Christians. It will be also argued that the isolation of the churches behind the Iron Curtain in North Korea was mainly caused, and was certainly compounded, by a compromising accommodation with anti-Communism, in which both Korean Protestant Christians and the World Council of Churches (WCC) connived during and after the Korean War. Lastly, it will be argued that the pre-1945 paradigm of opposition between church and state (examined in Part One) influenced the collision between the church and the Communist state in the North after 1945.

Chapter III

Division of the Nation, Division of the Churches, 1945-1949

1. Partition of Korea: Political Context

1.1 The Origin of Partition

Korea was liberated from Japanese tyranny with the defeat of Japan at the end of the Pacific War. It was an occasion of great rejoicing for the suffering *minjung* in Korea, especially for those Christians who had identified themselves with the Hebrews in Egypt. However, the superpowers, the USA, the USSR, China and Great Britain, decided to occupy Korea in order to disarm Japanese troops in Korea. This was the ostensible reason for the partition of the Korean peninsula.⁴

Behind the disarmament issue, however, the real intention behind the partition was the geo-political interest of the superpowers. The partition of the Korean peninsula had often been considered as a solution when superpowers collided in the peninsula, even in past history.⁵ For instance, during the *Im Jin Wei Ran* (壬辰倭亂) or Japanese Invasion of 1592-1598, Japan suggested to the *Ming* dynasty in China a partition of the peninsula as a way of achieving an armistice. During the Russo-Japanese war (1904), Japan and Russia also made a similar suggestion.⁶

In relation to what happened in 1945, the idea of partition originated when President Roosevelt suggested a system of trusteeship over Korea at a meeting with the British Foreign Secretary, A. Eden, in Washington on 24th March 1943.⁷ On 1st December 1943, the three participants of the Cairo Conference, USA, Great Britain and China declared, “in due course

⁴ Concerning the process of the partition, see, H. Kim, *The Division of Korea and Alliance Making Process: Internationalization of Internal Conflict and Internalization of International Struggle, 1945-1948*, London, University Press of America, 1995.

⁵ K. Noh, “An Historical Study on the Issue of Partition of Korean Peninsula”, in his book, *Hankuk Eoikyosa Yonku*, (A History of Korean Foreign Policy), Seoul, Haemoonsa, 1967, 152-179.

⁶ For details, see, Man-kil Kang, “Historical Causes of the National Division”, Man-kil Kang et. al., *Bundan Hyunsil kwa Tongil Undong*, (A Reality of Division and Reunification Movement), Seoul, Minjungsa, 1984, 20-26.

⁷ The Secretary of State, USA, Cordell Hull wrote that Eden favored this idea. However, later Eden wrote that he did not like the trusteeship idea. C. Hull, *Memoirs*, New York, Macmillan, 1948, 596; A. Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1965, 595.

Korea shall become free and independent”.⁸ Koreans welcomed the pledge, but worried about the proviso “in due course”.⁹ This worry became a reality on 8th February 1945, during the Yalta Conference. Roosevelt again asserted that Korea should have a trusteeship of twenty to thirty years. However, Stalin replied that it should be shorter. Stalin only agreed to the trusteeship on condition that there would be no foreign troops in Korea.¹⁰

However, this was an informal and secret agreement. Again, in May 1945, the new US President, H. Truman, sent his advisor, H. Hopkins, to Moscow and urged a four-power trusteeship for Korea for twenty-five years.¹¹ Finally, the trusteeship was formally decided on 22nd July 1945 at the Potsdam Conference of the Allied heads of state.¹² However, in practice, only the USA and USSR could participate in the trusteeship.¹³

In this process, we can firstly note that the disarming of the Japanese was not the original reason for the partition, or was only an excuse for sending troops into Korea. According to B. Commings, the US needed a military base in the Far East Asia for “American expansionism”.¹⁴ Secondly, although Korea was a victim of World War II, unlike Germany, and Koreans had fought against Japan for independence, the four powers decided on the unjust trusteeship, instead of ensuring the independence of Korea, to keep their power balance in the Far East. There was no historical justification for Korea’s division. “If any East Asian country should have been divided, it was Japan.”¹⁵

At the Potsdam Conference, the USA asked for the USSR’s entry into the war against Japan. A document said, “with reference to clean-up of the Asiatic mainland, our objective should be

⁸ US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945*, Washington D.C., 1969, 1098.

⁹ At the first draft, Roosevelt’s and later Truman’s advisor, H. Hopkins stated as “at the earliest possible moment”. Roosevelt changed it to “at the proper moment”. Lastly, Churchill suggested “in due course”. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences and Teheran, 1943*, Washington D. C., 1951, 399-404.

¹⁰ At first, Stalin rejected the trusteeship. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, Washington D.C., 1955, 770; 984.

¹¹ B. Commings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, 111.

¹² Concerning the Potsdam Conference, see, US Department of State, *The Conference of Berlin, 1945*, Washington D.C., 1960.

¹³ For details on the trusteeship in Korea, see, W. Morris, “The Korean Trusteeship, 1941-1947: The United States, Russia and the Cold War”, PhD Thesis, University of Texas, 1974; D. Clemens, *Yalta*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970; Hak-joon Kim, *Hankuk Munje wa Kukje Jungchi*, (Korean Issue in International Politics), Seoul, Bakyounsa, 1976.

¹⁴ B. Commings, *Op. Cit.*, 114.

¹⁵ B. Commings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, 186.

to get Russians to deal with the Japs in Manchuria (and Korea if necessary).”¹⁶ According to this agreement, the Soviet army began to fight the Japanese in Korea on 8th August 1945.¹⁷ The Soviet troops carried out the occupation of Korea north of the 38th Parallel and stopped there so that the Americans could come in from the South. However, Japan surrendered after a week of the Russian attack on Korea and the US Army came into Seoul on the 9th September 1945, when the situation was already over. If necessary, the Soviets had a mandate to defeat the Japanese in the whole of the Korean peninsula according to the Potsdam agreement. So, why did they stop their march at the 38th Parallel? And why did the American Army come into Korea after the surrender?

From the beginning of the international discussions on Korea, the USA was interested in coming into Korea as part of the trusteeship because the Korean peninsula an important strategic area in North East Asia, surrounded by superpowers. The USA war planners feared that the Soviets would bring with them Korean Communist guerillas, who had been fighting the Japanese in Manchuria, the numbers of which they grossly overestimated as up to thirty thousand. “Afraid that a trusteeship might not work, various planners began to develop ideas for full military occupation that would assure a predominant American voice in postwar Korean affairs.”¹⁸

For this purpose, the USA suddenly made a proposal to the USSR to divide Korea at latitude 38 North:

About midnight, August 10-11, 1945, Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel and Major Dean Rusk...began drafting part of a General Order that would define the zones to be occupied in Korea by American and Russian forces. They were given thirty minute to complete their draft, which a State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee was waiting for. The State Department wished the dividing line to be as far north as possible, while the military departments, knowing that Russians could overrun all of Korea before any American troops could land there, were more cautious...Bonesteel noted that the 38th Parallel passed north of Seoul and almost divided Korea into two equal parts. He seized on it as the proposed zonal boundary.¹⁹

¹⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum, 18th June 1945; in Potsdam Papers I, 905; recited from B. Commings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, 117.

¹⁷ Reference Division, Central Office of Information, *Korea*, London, Quote No. R.3965, Classification 1.2d, November 1958, 4.

¹⁸ B. Commings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 188.

¹⁹ J. Collins, *War in Peacetime: The History and Lessens of Korea*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969, 25-26.

American officials consulted no Koreans in coming to this decision, nor did they ask the opinions of the British or the Chinese, both of whom, it had previously been agreed, would take part in the planned trusteeship for Korea. The Russians accepted this decision, while demanding a Russian occupation of the northern part of Hokkaido in Japan.²⁰

The division of Korea, including the division of ten million families, a tragedy that would last over half a century was designated at the hands of young American war planners within thirty minutes.

1.2 The People's Committee and USAMGIK

As soon as Korea was liberated, the *Kunguk Junbi Wuiwonhoe* (建國準備委員會) or Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence²¹ emerged, and by September it was becoming anchored and widespread in the *Inmin Wuiwonhoe* (人民委員會) or "people's committees"²² in the countryside. These committees formed *Chosun Inmin Konghwaguk* (朝鮮人民共和國) or Korean People's Republic (KPR) on 6th September 1945.²³ In the Central People's Committee of the KPR, all important independence movement leaders joined together, bearing to one side their ideologies.²⁴ Eun Huh maintains the KPR was an authentic united front for national construction which covered all patriotic political powers from the left to the right wing in Korea, and had wide support from the Korean people.²⁵ The KPR governed Korea with the cabinet and police for a month before the arrival of the US army.²⁶

²⁰ B. Commings, *Op. Cit.*, 187.

²¹ Concerning the Committee, see, Dong-yup Lee, "The Establishment of the *Kunguk Junbi Wuiwonhoe*", in Kun-ho Song et. al., *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History Before and After Liberation), vol. 1, Seoul, Hankilsa, 1979, 347-353.

²² Concerning the People's Committees, see, Yong-bock Kim, "The organization and Activity of the People's Committee in North Korea after Liberation", in Nam-sik Kim et. al., *Haebang Junhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History Before and After Liberation), vol. 5, Seoul, Hankilsa, 1989, 203-219.

²³ Concerning the KPR, see, Eun Huh, "The Movement of Constructing Nation-State after Liberation", in Man-kil Kang ed., *Uri Minjok Haebang Undongsa*, (A History of National Liberation Movement of Korea), 307-324.

²⁴ For instance, there were Kim Ku and Kim Kyu-sik as the representatives of the government-in-exile, Kim Il-sung of the anti-Japanese Communist guerillas, Rhee Syngman of the exiled leadership in the USA, Cho Man-sik and Kim Sung-soo of the domestic nationalists, Cho Dong-ho of the domestic Communists, Mu Chung of the Yennan guerillas and Kim Kwan-sik of the Christians. The President was Syngman Rhee, the Vice-President was Ryu Un-hyung, and the Prime Minister was Huh Hyun.

²⁵ Eun Huh, *Op. Cit.*, 309-310.

²⁶ See, The Platform of the KPR

The Soviet Army supported the people's committee network but did not comment about the activity of the KPR, because the headquarters of the KPR were in Seoul, outside their zone. On 15th August, the liberation day, General I. Chistiakov of the Russian army made a statement as follows:

Now, Chosun (Korea) is a free and independent country. This is only the first page of a new Chosun history...The past which was a nightmare will disappear forever...For the freedom and well-being of Chosun people, the Russian Army will be happy to provide all of our supports...We did not come into Chosun as an occupier but we came as a liberator. I promise that we will not force our order and confirm that your people are the master of this nation.²⁷

Of course, the Russians would want to be involved in the fate of post-war Korea. However, they were confident of having the full cooperation of the Korean Communists. They fought and came together with Kim Il-sung's guerillas, which was the only fully armed force in Korea at that time. Therefore, the soviets supported the Korean Communists helping them to grasp political power rather than directly establishing a Russian military government in North Korea.²⁸

A. L. Strong gives a comprehensive account of the Russian policy in North Korea:

When the Red Army entered Korea in early August, 1945, heavy battles took place in the North, but Japanese rule remained tranquil in the South, for the Russians stopped at the 38th Parallel, while the Americans came three weeks after the surrender of Japan and took over from the Jap officials, continuing much of the former apparatus in power. Hence, all pro-Japanese Koreans, former police, Civil Servants, landlords and any persons averse to change generally, naturally fled south to American zone. The flight of these Right-wing elements simplified North Korean politics. The Russians did not need to appoint a single official. They merely set free ten thousand political

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- We will construct entire independent nation-state in politics and economy.
 - We will clear Japanese and feudal remnants and establish an authentic democracy in order to realize political, economical and social needs of all people.
 - We will rapidly upgrade the quality of life of workers, farmers and the masses.
 - We will have solidarity with world democratic countries to achieve world peace.

Quoted from *Ibid*, 308.

²⁷ I. Chistiakov, "An Appeal to the Liberated Chosun People from the Commander of 25th Army, The First Front of the Soviet Far Eastern Force", *Chosun Choongang Nyungam*, (Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1949, 57-58, Archival no. 488, The Ministry of Reunification.

²⁸ Myung-rim Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins*, vol. 2, Seoul, Nanam, 1996, 83-84; C.f. The British Central Office of Information reported, "When Soviet forces entered North Korea in August 1945, they installed the 'peoples committees' in nominal control but under their own unostentatious supervision." However, this was not true, because there were also a lot of pro-American leadership within the KPR. Reference Division, Central Office of Information, *Op. Cit.*, 6.

prisoners and let them go home and organize things. "People's Committees" sprang up by villages, counties and provinces, and coalesced into a Central People's Committee.²⁹

However, Americans had a doubt fearing that the KPR was dominated by the Communists. They were encouraged by the presence of the pro-American Christian conservatives educated in America, such as Syngman Rhee.³⁰ The Americans were impatient because they thought that the Russians had already taken political hegemony in Korea. General D. MacArthur announced the partition of the Korean peninsula and declared that "all power of government over the territory of Korea south of the 38th north latitude, and the people thereof, will be for the present exercised under my authority" in his General Order no. 1.³¹ Also, when the 24th Corps of the US Army landed in Inchon to begin the military government in Korea, its commander, General J. Hodge, ordered Koreans not to engage in political activities, especially any activities in opposition to the US military government.³² Added to the order was a warning of severe punishment,³³ and on 9th September 1945, the office of the US Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) declared that English was to be the official language of South Korea.³⁴ Wi-jo Kang makes the criticism that these orders and declarations were harsh, "seeking only to fulfill US policies and ignoring Korean interests in creating a united, democratic, independent Korea."³⁵

Hodge thought Southern Korea would be "extremely fertile ground for the establishment of Communism":

Communism in Korea could get off to a better start than practically anywhere else in the world. The Japanese owned the railroads, all of the public utilities including power and light, as well as all of the major industries and natural resources. Therefore, if these are suddenly found to be owned by the "The People's Committee (The Communist Party), they will have acquired them without any struggle of any kind or any work in developing them. This is one of the reasons why the US should not waive

²⁹ A. L. Strong, "North Korea", *The New Statesman and Nation*, vol. 35, No. 880, 17th January 1948, 47.

³⁰ Eun Huh, *Op. Cit.*, 310.

³¹ Quoted from S. Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 62-63.

³² Wi-jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea*, 71.

³³ Dong A Ilbo Sa ed., *Hanmi Sugyo Baeknyunsa Kwankye Jaryo mit Nyunpyo*, (One Hundred Years History of Korea-US Relations: Documents and Chronology), Seoul, Dong A Ilbo Sa, 1982, 155.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁵ Wi-jo Kang, *Op. Cit.*, 72.

its title or claim to Japanese external assets located in Korea until a democratic (capitalistic) form of government is assured.³⁶

Although the Central People's Committee of the KPR was a united front including pro-Americans, Hodge defined it as a Communist party to develop an atmosphere of rivalry, emphasizing the Communist versus the capitalist, in order to ensure "US prestige in the Far East."³⁷ For their own benefit, "the Americans would not turn Korea over to the Koreans;"³⁸ rather they linked up with the Japanese:

Shortly after the surrender ceremony on September 9, Hodge announced that the (Japanese) Government-General would continue to function with all of its Japanese and Korean personnel, including Governor-General Abe Nobuyuki.³⁹

The Soviets were clever enough to use indirectly the orthodoxy of Kim Il-sung and the popularity of the people's committee to enlarge their political influence over Korea. However, the Americans made the mistake of suppressing the indigenous political movement, including the people's committees, aiming at national construction. They even cooperated with their enemy of three weeks before, the Japanese, in order to develop and to strengthen their military government in South Korea with an ideological justification.

1.3 Emergence of Two Koreas

With the partition, the establishment of divided government proceeded rapidly. In the North, the local people's committees formed the Provisional People's Committee as an interim government in place of the Central People's Committee in the South, with the support of the Soviet Army. Kim Il-sung was elected as Chairperson. On 3rd November, the People's Committee in North Korea was established, through election, with full political power. However, there was Christian resistance in establishing the Committee because of the Sunday election and land reform.⁴⁰ North Koreans did not yet establish a government in the proper sense. The Committee was only given the role of an interim government because the majority of Koreans still expected a united government between the North and the South.

³⁶ United States, State Department, *Foreign Relations of United States, Diplomatic Papers*, vol. 8, Washington D. C., 1946, 706-709.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1945, vol. 6, 1148.

³⁸ B. Commings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 200.

³⁹ B. Commings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, 138.

⁴⁰ See, Part Two, Chapter I, Section 4.2.3.

In the South, The American army dispersed the Central People's Committee and established USAMGIK.⁴¹ However, from the beginning, the USAMGIK faced a series of anti-American mass uprisings in Yusu, Taegu and Cheju.⁴² These rebellions were caused by American cooperation with Japanese and pro-Japanese Koreans. As a result of colonial exploitation, the Japanese and the pro-Japanese possessed almost 90 percent of land and industries in Korea.⁴³ The masses expected that the USAMGIK would return, or redistribute the land to the Korean people as North Korea did. However, the USAMGIK protected the pro-Japanese's properties to use them as anti-Communist, American supporters.⁴⁴ Even General Hodge recognized that something was wrong: "the word pro-American is added to pro-Jap, national traitor, and collaborator."⁴⁵

Thus, the establishment of a pro-American Korean government in the South became intention of the US, instead of governing directly through the USAMGIK. However, a majority of Koreans still expected to eliminate the division along the 38th Parallel and bring about a united independent government as soon as possible. As a matter of fact, efforts to reunite the country were initiated immediately after its occupation by the Allied forces. In December 1945, foreign ministers of the US, the USSR and Great Britain agreed at the Moscow Conference to structure an independent and united government under the trusteeship of the US, the USSR, Great Britain and China, for a period of five years. The Korean Communists thought that this proposal was an effective way to bring about national reunification. However, others rejected it.⁴⁶ To plan a united and independent government in Korea, the US and the

⁴¹ Concerning USAMGIK, see, E. Meade, *American Military Government in Korea*, New York, King's Crown Press, Colombia University, 1951; K. Kang, "The United States Military Government in Korea, 1945-1948", PhD Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1970; Soon-sung Cho, "The failure of American Military Government in Korea", *Korean Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1963; Duk-kyu Jin, "A Historical Recognition on American Military Government", in Kun-ho et. al., *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History Before and After Liberation), vol. 1, Seoul, Hankilsa, 1979, 33-63; Sang-yong Choi, *Migunjung kwa Hankuk Minjokjueui*, (American Military Government in Korea and Korean Nationalism), Seoul, Nanam, 1986; Yong-joong Cho, *Migunjung haeui Hankuk Jungchi*, (Korean Politics under the American Military Government), Seoul, Nanam, 1990.

⁴² Concerning the uprisings, see, B. Commings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 217-224.

⁴³ See, Chapter III, Section 4.3.

⁴⁴ B. Comings states that the "North Wind" of land reform blew to the South. See, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 424-426.

⁴⁵ Quoted, B. Commings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*. 198.

⁴⁶ Hak-joon Kim, "Background of Division and Process of Adherence", in Kun-ho Song et. al., *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History Before and After Liberation), vol. 1, 80-88.

USSR met twice in 1946 and 1947 (Joint US-Soviet Commission) in Seoul, but they failed to reach an agreement.⁴⁷

In 1947, the US brought up the Korean issue in the General Assembly of the UN. The UN decided to have a free election in both sides of Korea under the supervision of the UN. However, this decision was made in the absence of the USSR, who insisted on creating the government in accordance with the agreement of the Moscow conference.⁴⁸ The USSR and Kim Il-sung strongly rejected the election because they believed the US altered the Moscow agreement by using the UN. Therefore, the US proposed a unilateral election in the South to the Interim UN Committee on Korea on 19th February 1948. However, Canada and Australia rejected this idea because they believed this proposal could bring a permanent division of Korea.⁴⁹ The US reintroduced the proposal on the 26th, and it was approved to hold the unilateral election before 10th May 1948.⁵⁰

Koreans, who had divided into pro-trusteeship and anti-trusteeship groups, now divided further into pro-unilateral and anti-unilateral election parties. Rhee and the pro-Americans including pro-Japanese, supported the election. However, Kim Il-sung and the Korean Communists, together with Kim Ku, the former president of Korean the government-in-exile, and Korean nationalists rejected it.⁵¹ In spite of strong opposition in South Korea, the US and Rhee carried on the election and the elected representatives chose the first president of Republic. This was none other than Rhee himself. Finally, the independence of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was declared on 15th August 1948, in the southern half of Korea.

In response to the establishment of the ROK in the South, North Korea established its own government as well. Although Kim Il-sung and the Soviets had insisted on a unified

⁴⁷ Concerning the Joint US-Soviet Commission, see, H. Kim, *The Division of Korea and Alliance Making Process*, 179-184.

⁴⁸ Wi-jo Kang, *Op. Cit.*, 73.

⁴⁹ U.N. Document, A/AC, 18/SR. 9. Copied from WCC-CCIA Archive.

⁵⁰ U.N. Document, A/AC, 19/48. Copied from WCC-CCIA Archive.

⁵¹ Kim Il-sung called a joint meeting of all political parties and organizations including those in South Korea to discuss this issue at Pyongyang from 19-23 April 1948. Here, Korean Communists and nationalists agreed to reject the unilateral election and to try to establish a united government between the North and the South. There were 695 political representatives and 3 political parties and 12 organizations, including the North Korean Christian Association from the North, and 7 parties and 28 organizations, including the Christian Democracy Alliance, from the South. The numbers are calculated from the epitaph of the United Front Monument, at Ssuksum Island in Taedong River, Pyongyang.

government, they must have been thoroughly prepared for the establishment a northern government as well, because they elected the representatives of the Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) within a month of the election in the South. In September 1948, the Assembly declared the birth of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), and Kim Il-sung became the Prime Minister.⁵²

In this context, we will examine the way in which the Protestant Churches in North Korea witnessed over the issue of the division of both the nation and the churches.

2. Liberation and the Reconstruction of Churches

2.1 Protestant Churches in Northern Korea before the Liberation

Many Korean Christians have heard about the churches in the ‘Jerusalem of East Asia’ from their ancestors. However, little scientific research has been conducted on the characteristics of Christianity in the North before the liberation. To start the research on Protestant Christianity in North Korea after liberation and partition, it is necessary to survey how many Protestant Christians there were when Korea was liberated. We can find reliable sources describing North Korean Christianity in the documents of the Japanese Colonial Government in Korea (JCGIK):

Table 7) Distribution of Christians, Churches and Ministers in Northern Korea before the Liberation⁵³

No./De.	PCK	KMC	KHC	SDAC	KAC	SA	Etc	Total
Christians	191,245	23,265	5,452	2,665	1,810	713	3,189	228,339
Churches	1,507	284	58	78	44	27	99	2,097
Ministers	1,621	141	68	27	32	25	69	1,983

No: Number, De: denominations, PCK: Presbyterian Church of Korea, KMC: Korean Methodist Church, KHC: Korean Holiness Church, SDAC: Seventh-Day Adventist Church, KAC: Korean Anglican Church, SA: Salvation Army

The above figures indicate that there were about 230,000 Christians, 2,100 churches and 2,000 ministers in the North before the liberation. The JCGIK noted that about 45% of the

⁵² H. Kim, *Tongil Munje eui Jongchaeksajok Gochal*, (A Historical Study of the Korean Reunification Policies), Pyongyang, Pyongyang Chulpansa, 1989, 81.
⁵³ N.B., The author re-arranged the numbers of churches and ministers in JCGIK, *Annual Statistical Report*, Seoul, JCGIK, 1942 and the numbers of Christians in JCGIK Public Security Unit, *Godung Woisa Wolbo* (Journal of JCGIK-Public Security Unit), vol. 19, 1940, 38-41.

Korean churches were in the North before the liberation.⁵⁴ Why then, did Korean Christians generally presume that the majority of Christians were in the North before the Liberation? The JCGIK's figure can be misleading, and needs to be explained properly. Although the percentage of churches was a bit smaller than that of the South, the percentage of the Christian number was quite different. 65% of the total number of Christians was in the North.⁵⁵ Especially when we focus on the Presbyterian Church, which was 84% of all Christians in the North 75% (191,254) of all Presbyterians in Korea (256,575)⁵⁶ were in the North. From the results of the above analysis, it was clear that the majority of Protestant Christians in Korea were indeed in the North before the liberation.

As we already noted, after opposing the *Shinto* Shrine worship, many Northern Korean churches were abolished by the Japanese authorities, while other churches which cooperated with colonial rule were absorbed to the *Kyodan* in 1942. Yang-sun Kim reported that in 1945, the number of Protestant Christians had been reduced by the Japanese persecution to half the total before the *Shinto* issue of 1937.⁵⁷ Therefore, the reconstruction of churches was the most urgent issue for Protestant Christians in North Korea after the liberation.

2.2 “Martyrs” vs “Lapsers”⁵⁸

The process of reconstruction focused on two directions. Firstly, it was necessary to recover the church's orthodoxy and order, which had been manipulated by the Japanese. This required the re-establishment of the separate denominations which had either been forcibly united in the *Kyodan* or abolished by the Japanese; re-starting theological education; re-gathering scattered members; and re-connecting with foreign missionary boards. Secondly, it was necessary to clear the remains of Japanese colonial legacy within the churches, especially

⁵⁴ JCG IK-Public Security Unit, *Ibid.*, 41

⁵⁵ N.B. The author calculated this percentage by dividing the total number of Christians in Korea in 1941 (351,222) by that of Christians in the North in 1942 (228,339). The total number of Christians in Korea in 1941 is quoted from IKCH ed., *Hankuk Kidokyo eui Yoksa*, vol. 2, 261.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 260. C.f. Kwan-sik Kim reported a bit smaller numbers of Presbyterians to the International Missionary Council in 1942: Pastors in charge: 523, Pastors without charge: 86, Missionaries: 2, Elders: 3,121, Deacons: 649, Churches: 2,546, Memberships: 249,746, Sunday schools: 3,252, Students: 286,510, Teachers: 26,610, Total Expenditure: 22,448,331 Won, Kan-sik Kim, “The Statistics of the PCK”, 1942, WCC Archive No. 42. 4. 054/4.

⁵⁷ Yang-sun Kim, *Hankuk Kidokyo Haebang Shibnyun Sa*, (A Decade History of the Liberation of Korean Church), Seoul, PCK, 1956, 44.

⁵⁸ N.B. The author quotes these terms from Seong-won Park, *Worship in the Presbyterian Church in Korea*, 137.

ecclesiastical power structure which had been dominated by pro-Japanese Christians after 1937.⁵⁹

Seong-won Park argued that in the reconstruction process, the most serious issue was the question of readmission of those who had capitulated to *Shinto* Shrine worship.⁶⁰ Three different approaches on how to purify “the lapsed churches” were put forward by the leaders who had rejected the worship and were now released from prison: 1) reconstruction within the existing church, 2) reconstruction through an act of penance of the lapsed, and 3) reconstruction of an entirely new church.

To resolve this issue, the released Christians gathered at Sanjunghyun Presbyterian Church, where Rev. Chu Ki-chul,⁶¹ martyred by the Japanese because of his rejection of the Shrine Worship, had been the pastor. This gathering was in Pyongyang because the North Korean church was a center of the anti-*Shinto* movement, and most of the released Christians were from the North. After two months of prayer and meeting, they announced the Five Basic Principles to be followed in the reconstruction:

1. Since all the church leaders participated in Shinto Shrine worship, they have to purify themselves through penance before engaging in church activities.
2. Penance will be performed through self-discipline or repentance, and ministers undergo at least two months of penance and confession.
3. During this period, ministers and elders are not officiating; deacons or ordinary believers will lead services.
4. The Basic Principles for church reconstruction must be delivered all over the country so that they can be practiced simultaneously.
5. Seminaries should be restored and reconstructed to train clergy.⁶²

However, this proposal was rejected by those who had participated in the *Shinto* shrine worship. They justified their actions, saying they had cooperated with the Japanese to protect churches and lay people. Rev. Tack-kee Hong, who was moderator of the 27th General Assembly of the PCK (1938), which had approved the shrine worship, insisted as follows:

⁵⁹ IKCH ed., *A History of Church in North Korea*, 353.

⁶⁰ Seong-won Park, *Op. Cit.*, 137.

⁶¹ Concerning the life and work of Rev. Chu, see, In-soo Kim, *Chu Ki-Chul Moksa eui Saengae wa Seolkyojip*, (The life and Preaching of Rev. Chu Ki-Chul), Seoul, Shinang Saengwhalsa, 1959; Chung-nam Kim, *Sunkyoja Chu Ki-Chul Moksa eui Saengae*, (The Life of Martyr Chu Ki-Chul), Seoul, Bakhap, 1987; Yong-kyu Park, *Jer Nopun Got eul Hanghayeo*, (Towards Heaven), Seoul, Saengmyung eui Malssumsa, 1992.

⁶² Yang-sun Kim, *Op.Cit.*, 45.

As far as suffering was concerned, the suffering of those in prison and those who had been serving churches had been same and, moreover, that the decision of those who had remained to bear on their shoulders the work of the church under Japanese oppression was more commendable than that of those who had fled abroad or withdrawn to some place of safety, even though the former might have compromised because they could not help themselves. Furthermore, the matter of repentance or discipline for shrine worship was a thing to be worked out directly with God by each individual.⁶³

This argument led to a sharp difference of opinions between the two groups, the released and “the lapsed”. In fact, two months penance was not severe punishment for “the lapsed.” However, the church leaders, who had worshiped the *Shinto* shrine, thought if they accepted the penance, they would lose their ecclesiastical power. For the compromised leaders, the power would have allowed them to secure their position in the church or presbytery as before. For the released leaders, the power would have allowed them not only to purify the church but also to expel the compromised leaders from the ecclesiastical power structure.⁶⁴ Therefore, these two groups could not reach a position of agreement.

In this conflict, the Five Province Joint Presbytery (FPJP), which acted provisionally in place of the General Assembly of the PCK in the North, decided on a modest solution in which every church would confess its past sin in relation to the *Shinto* shrine worship, and all church officers would do penance for two months.⁶⁵ This decision seemed somehow balanced and reasonable. It, however, was vague and even unjust for those who were persecuted. Only those who had cooperated with the Japanese needed to do penance, not everybody. Moreover, in practice, the penance lost its meaning because it was difficult to minister to every congregation for two months. Many congregations were without ministers.

2.3 The Process of Reconstruction and the Division of the Churches

Before the liberation, 84% of all Protestant Christians in Northern Korea were Presbyterian. Methodists were 10% and the others were 6%. Here, we will examine the process of reconstruction and the division into Northern and Southern churches that followed.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶⁴ See. Hee-mo Yim, *Unity Lost-Unity to be Regained in Korean Presbyterianism: A History of Divisions in Korean Presbyterianism and the Role of the Means of Grace*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1996, 75-76.

⁶⁵ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 47.

2.3.1 The Five Province Joint Presbytery vs the Independent Presbytery

After the announcement of the Five Basic Principles on 20th September 1945, there were two streams of argument between the released and “the lapsed”. On 14th November 1945, the six presbyteries in the Northern districts organized an annual closing conference of ministers for a week at Wolkokdong Church, where Rev. Tack-kee Hong was the minister.⁶⁶ The basic purpose of this meeting was to discuss the reconstruction of churches.⁶⁷ Invited as keynote speakers, Rev. Ki-sun Lee gave witness to his Christian faith in jail and Dr. Hyung-nyong Park reaffirmed the Five Basic Principles.⁶⁸ Both of them intended to restructure the ecclesiastical power in northern Presbyterianism, with support from their audiences.⁶⁹

However, this intention could not be realized because of the counter argument of the group of Tack-kee Hong, who had been pro-Japanese. This group insisted that the establishment of the Five Province Joint Presbytery as a provisional assembly in North Korea was the most urgent issue for the churches. They justified that the unity of Christians was needed rather than division, to struggle with the Communists.⁷⁰ Their proposal seemed to have more support from the participants because there had already been several serious clashes between the Christians and the Communists, such as the Ryongampo affairs.⁷¹ Finally, The conference agreed to establish the FPJP and organized the preparatory committee.

On 1st December 1945, the inaugural synod meeting of the FPJP was held at the Jangdaehyun Church in Pyongyang and approved six important decisions:

⁶⁶ Rev. Hong was the moderator of the 27th General Assembly of PCK. As the moderator, he approved the shrine worship. He invited the conference at his church. It seems that he was well developed in politics. At first, he found his excuse against the released Christians in anti-Communism. However, later, he supported the NKCA, for his own survival, as he had done under the Japanese rule. See, Kwang-sik Kim, *Bukhan Kyohoe Tamku Sa*, (A History of Christianity in Northern Korea), Seoul, Christian Literature Press, 1994, 187.

⁶⁷ Yang-sun Kim, *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁸ Kyung-bae Min, *A History of the Christian Church in Korea*, 450.

⁶⁹ IKCH ed., *A History of Church in North Korea*, 356.

⁷⁰ Kwang-sik Kim, *Hankuk Kidokyo Jaegun Sa*, (A History of Reconstruction of the Korean Church), Seoul, Christian Literature Press, 1981, 40-41; A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 188-189.

⁷¹ On the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of the Ryongampo branch of the Christian Social Democracy Party, which was held on 16th November 1945 in Ryongampo Church, the Communists and the Christians clashed and Elder Suk-hwang Hong, who was a local leader of the party, was killed by the Communists. See, In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 559-560.

1. The Five Province Joint Presbytery shall act as a temporary measure, in place of the General Assembly, until the establishment of the united Assembly between the North and South Presbyterian churches.
2. The constitution before 1938 (i.e. pre-*Kyodan* constitution) shall be used, but it will not be revised until the united Assembly.
3. All churches confess their past sin in the matter of the shrine worship and the Church officers do penance for two months.
4. The theological seminary shall be carried on under the direct management of the Joint Presbytery.
5. Throughout the country, a massive evangelistic campaign will be undertaken to Christianize the fatherland by organizing the Independence Memorial Evangelism Society (*Tokrip Kinyum Chundo Hoi*).
6. The representatives of the Joint Presbyteries shall be sent to South Korea to present our appreciations to the commander of the Allied Headquarters.⁷²

This decision contains problems in relation to the future of the North Korean church. Firstly, the division of the North and South churches was caused by establishing a separate governing body in the North, without discussion with the southern presbyteries.⁷³ Secondly, the need of penance was also downgraded. In fact, the main issue of the Five Principles was the purification of churches from the legacy of colonialism within the churches. However, here, instead of the purification, evangelism became an important agenda. Thirdly, the released Christians were excluded from the church hierarchy. To avoid confrontation, the FPJP elected officers only from middle line people, cutting out the two wings, “the lapsers” and the released.⁷⁴ However, this was again extremely unjust, because “the lapsers” were those who needed penance and the released were those who had held to the orthodoxy of the church’s witness in its colonial context.⁷⁵ Lastly, the FPJP had a biased view that was over-suspicious towards the Communists. This will be importantly argued later.

In this context, the released Christians had a very limited choice. Finally, the released Christians who had pursued reform in the existing church, began to think earnestly about their position and their attitudes. They thought the FPJP merely gave indulgence to “the lapsers”. The persecuted initiated their own process for rehabilitation in North Korea. The group of Rev. Ki-sun Lee organized the Independent Presbytery consisting of thirty congregations in Pyungbuk province, North Korea.⁷⁶ They called themselves the *Hyuksin Pokku Pa* or

⁷² Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 47-48.

⁷³ In the South, the Southern Synod organized on 12th June 1946. See, In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 576-579.

⁷⁴ The synod elected Rev. Jin-soo Kim as the moderator, Rev. Hwa-sik Kim as the vice-moderator. See, IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 356-357.

⁷⁵ Compare the leaders of Confessing Church in Germany after the World War II.

⁷⁶ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 557.

Reformed Restoration Group.⁷⁷ This should be remembered as the first division of Korean Presbyterianism.⁷⁸

Indeed, the purification of pro-Japanese remnants from the period of Japanese institutional order was an urgent issue for North Korean churches. However, the church was divided because of the over-justification of “the lapsers,” and the exclusive self-righteous approach of the released.⁷⁹

2.3.2 The South Division General Assembly

Meanwhile, in the South, the leaders of the *Kyodan*, the government-organized union created by the Japanese, felt that this united church should be continued. Whatever their personal reasons, they stated that, in as much as the new national leaders, Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, Kim Kyoo-sik, etc., were all Christians, it would be excellent for the *Kyodan*, to continue its function “in order to provide a Christian ideology of national reconstruction and to cooperate with them,”⁸⁰ rather than to be divided again into denominations.⁸¹ However, the *Kyodan* was a kind of anti-patriotic church, which supported Japanese imperialism. A. Clark argues that the reconstruction of the National Council of Churches in Korea was a more historically legitimate means to meet this purpose.⁸²

On 8th September 1945, the former *Kyodan* leaders re-organized the *Kyodan* Synod under the name of the Southern Synod. They assumed they could also re-establish a similar *Kyodan* Synod in the North.⁸³ For this reason, they called it the *Nambu Daehoe* (南部大會) or Southern Synod. However, a number of the Methodist delegates declared the re-establishment of the Methodist Church. In fact, “many Presbyterians also preferred to return to their own

⁷⁷ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 148.

⁷⁸ Now, there are more than one hundred Presbyterian denominations in South Korea. For details of a history of the division, see. Hee-mo Yim, *Op. Cit.*

⁷⁹ They said, “There is no salvation in the (*Shinto* Shrine) worshiped churches”. Quoted from In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 557.

⁸⁰ Quoted from Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 50.

⁸¹ See, Tack-bu Chon, *Hankuk Ecumenical Undongsa*, (A History of Ecumenical Movement in Korea), Seoul, Notional Council of Churches in Korea, 1979, 224-229.

⁸² A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 236.

⁸³ A. Clark, *Ibid.*, 237.

denominational status”,⁸⁴ not simply based on their denominationalism but in relation to the pro-Japanese nature of the *Kyodan*. In the end, the Southern Synod proved a failure.

In spite of their ecumenical intention, the Southern Synod could not have support from Christian masses, and merely provided an opportunity for a re-division of the churches in the South.

After the failure of the *Kyodan*, by the spring of the 1946, all the South Korean presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church had been re-organized and, on 12th June, a meeting of the South Division General Assembly (SDGA) was held at the Seungdong Presbyterian Church in Seoul. Four important decisions were approved at the inaugural meeting:

1. The church constitution would be used without revision.
2. The sinful action of the 27th General Assembly in regard to the *Shinto* Shrine worship is rescinded.
3. The Chosun Theological Seminary will be the seminary of the General Assembly.
4. The issue of women’s ordination will be postponed until the united General Assembly.⁸⁵

It is significant that both the FPJP in the North and the SDGA in the South, tried to retain a unified constitution, in view of future reunification. However, in regard to the purification issue, In-soo Kim insists that in fact, this point was dominated by “the lapsed.” For evidence, he points out that the rescinded action of the 27th Assembly was re-rescinded at the 39th General Assembly.⁸⁶ According to him, Article Two of 1946 was only a temporary gesture by “the lapsed,” aimed at maintaining and managing their ecclesiastical power.⁸⁷

In April, the SDGA met at the First Taegu Presbyterian Church and decided that, since the hope of reunification had become weaker, it would be better to continue as a formal General Assembly of Presbyterian Church of Korea.⁸⁸ Finally, the meeting declared itself to be the 33rd General Assembly.

⁸⁴ A. Clark, *Ibid.*, 237.

⁸⁵ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 52.

⁸⁶ Presbyterian Church in Korea, *The Minute of 39th General Assembly*, 1954, 263.

⁸⁷ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 577.

⁸⁸ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 53.

2.3.3 The Reconstruction of the Methodist Church

Before joining to the *Kyodan* in 1941, the West Conference of the Methodist Church had existed in Northern Korea. However, the reconstruction of the conference was delayed in the North after the liberation, because the majority of the Methodist Church was in the South.

When the Methodist representatives walked out of the meeting of the *Kyodan* Synod, on 8th September 1945 in Seoul, they met together at the Dongdaemoon Methodist Church, and formed the Central Rehabilitation Committee.⁸⁹ This Committee then went on to organize three Conferences and called for a General Conference on 14th January 1946 at the same church in Seoul. This Conference approved the re-establishment of the Methodist Church and the re-opening of the Methodist Theological Seminary.⁹⁰

In-soo Kim states that at first, the Central Rehabilitation Committee group was a small minority within the Korean Methodist churches. Only seventy churches joined to the Committee.⁹¹ As we studied at Part One, on the issue of *Shinto* shrine worship, the Korean Methodist Church understood the worship as a national ceremony. Therefore, the majority of Methodists took part in the worship. This participation brought closer relationship with the *Kyodan* in contrast to the Presbyterians. Finally, the Korean Methodist Church easily absorbed into *Kyodan* in 1941.

However, there was a small minority of the Methodists, who rejected the worship, such as Chang-joon Kim and Hong-kyu Byun. The people who walked out at the *Kyodan* Synod Meeting in 1945 were the Methodists who rejected the Worship. They wanted to recover the Korean Methodist Church, quite apart from any Japanese-given ecclesiastical order.⁹² After a while, the Korean Methodist Church divided into two General Conferences, the Rehabilitation group and the *Kyodan* group. Later, in 1949, both of them reconciled and held a united General Conference.⁹³

⁸⁹ Dong-sik Ryu, *Jungdong Jeil Kyohoe eui Yoksa*, (A History of the Jungdong First Methodist Church), Seoul, Jungdong First Methodist Church, 1992, 380.

⁹⁰ A. Clark, *Op. Cit.*, 238.

⁹¹ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 578.

⁹² Tack-bu Chun, *The History of Church Development in Korea*, Seoul, CLS, 1987, 277-278.

⁹³ In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 579.

When the Rehabilitation group organized the General Conference in January 1946, Rev. Yun-young Lee was elected as the chairperson of the West Conference. However, the Rehabilitation group could not carry on re-organizing the West Conference because of the partition of the Korean peninsula. Rather, the Northern Methodists re-organized the West Conference by themselves in October 1946.⁹⁴

The first West Conference was held at Namsanhyun Church in Pyongyang and elected Rev. Jung-kun Song as a chairperson. The important decisions approved at the inaugural conference were as follows:

1. Until to hold a united General Conference with South Korean Methodists, we will not hold a separate General Conference.
2. The Chairperson of the West Conference will act as an interim bishop to do the ministry ordination and appointments until the united General Conference.
3. The district of West Conference is the whole of North Korea above the 38th parallel.
4. If they want, the pastors who were excommunicated under Japanese rule can recover their original post.⁹⁵

Here, we can find that, contrary to the argument within the Presbyterian Church in North Korea, there was no serious argument on the *Shinto* issue at the inaugural Conference of the West Conference of the Methodist Church in North Korea.⁹⁶ Instead of the penance, the Conference recognized the resumption of office for the persecuted Methodist pastors, if there were any. Because North Korean Methodists also understood the shrine worship as a sort of national ceremony and, most of them had participated in the worship, they considered it was not a matter for penance.

The Korean Presbyterians defined *Shinto* worship as idolatry. Even some Presbyterian theologians used the terminology of “martyrs” and “lapsed” due to distinguish those who one participated in the worship from those who were persecuted because of rejecting it.⁹⁷ However, we cannot find this kind of argument among the Methodists themselves. In this different response, the Methodists’ different theological understanding of idolatry was one of the crucial causes.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Chun-byung Yun, *8.15 Ihu Kamrikyo Seobu Yunhoe Sunansa*, (A Suffering History of the West Conference of the Korean Methodist Church after the Liberation), Seoul, Korean Methodist Church Press, 1987, 46-48.

⁹⁵ Chun-byung Yun, *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹⁶ See, IKCH ed., *A History of the Church in North Korea*, 362-362.

⁹⁷ See, Chapter III, Section 2.2.

⁹⁸ Concerning this argument, see, Chapter IV, Section 4.2.3 and 4.3.

In spite of the different understanding of shrine worship, the Methodists might not want to be reminded of their shameful history. It was a shameful history because firstly, there were also Methodists who rejected the worship. Secondly, even a Japanese pastor, who had a special mandate to persuade Korean Christians, recognized that the *Shinto* shrine worship in Korea included some religious factors. Kosi Josi reported, “I think, it is unreasonable to force the Christians who emphasize puritan faith to accept the religious factors of *Shintoism*.”⁹⁹ Lastly, even if it was a national ceremony, bowing to the East and reciting the pledge of vassals of Empire, which were compulsory in the ceremony,¹⁰⁰ were considered anti-national behavior to the Korean nationalists and the Communists who led the independence struggle, because it involved praising the colonial occupier.

3. Political Engagement of Northern Protestantism

3.1 From *Minjung* to Elite: Class Changes among Protestant Christians

Protestant Christianity developed among the classes that had been discriminated against socially and historically in Northern Korea. From the beginning, it deeply engaged with the social context of the *minjung* class, quite different from the *Yangban*-centered approach of Roman Catholicism in Southern Korea. What was unique was that northern Protestantism was a religion of the *minjung* class.

Throughout the Japanese colonial period, there had been radical class changes in Northern Korea. The traditional Confucian feudal class system which was divided into four classes, *Yangban*, *Jung-in*, *Pyung-min* and *Chunmin*,¹⁰¹ collapsed due to the Korean enlightenment movement and Japanese rule.¹⁰² In the process of this fragmentation of the traditional class

⁹⁹ Bokum Shinmoon, (The Good News), 8th September 1938.

¹⁰⁰ See, Chapter IV, Section 4.1.2.

¹⁰¹ For details, see, the table 2, Correlations between the religions and the class structure of Chosun society, Chapter I, Section 1.3.1.

¹⁰² Concerning, the sociological analysis on the class changes during the Japanese rule, see, Y. Jin, “A Development of the Farming Class under the Japanese Rule”, in *Hankuk Kundae Sahoesa Yonku*, (A Study of Modern Social History in Korea), Seoul, Hankuk Kundae Sahoesa Yonku Hoe, 1987; B. Ahn, “A Study on Class Change of Korean Labors under the Japanese Rule”, *The Journal of Korean History*, vol. 25, 23-38.

system, the Christian concept of the equality of all human beings emerged, providing a philosophical background against which social change could take place.

The fragmentation of traditional class structures also gave opportunities for class change to *minjung* Protestant Christians in Northern Korea. It was characteristic of mission policy in Korea that missionaries tried to evangelize Korean people through educational and medical work.¹⁰³ Korean Christian nationalists also strengthened education as a means of fostering independence. According to In-chul Kang, Protestant churches and foreign missionary boards ran 80% of all schools in Northern Korea before the liberation.¹⁰⁴ In 1910, there were 581 mission schools, out of which 403 were Presbyterian, in Northern Korea.¹⁰⁵ This means Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea provided abundant educational opportunities to Christian children, and sometimes to adults as well not only through the Sunday School but also through regular education.¹⁰⁶ It was natural that the majority of the students of the schools were Christian, so it was especially the Christians who had the benefit of modern education. These educated Christians started to form a new social elite group by getting jobs in urban area in Northern Korean.¹⁰⁷

In higher education, the Protestant Christian contribution was noticeable. Sungsil Christian University was the first university in Korea, and the only one in the northern part of the country before the liberation. The other two institutions which provided higher degrees, were Pyongyang Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church and Sunghwa Theological Seminary of the Methodist Church. To enter those higher education institutions, the endorsement of church leaders or missionaries was compulsory.¹⁰⁸ At post-graduate level, which had not existed in Korea before the liberation, foreign mission boards were virtually the only channel to study in America and Europe, although other possibilities did exist to pursue further education in Japan and China.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ See, H. H. Underwood, *Modern Education in Korea*, New York, International Press, 1926.

¹⁰⁴ In-chul Kang, "A Recognition of Modern Religious History in North Korea", 149.

¹⁰⁵ Li-soo Son, *A History of Modern Education in Korea*, 86.

¹⁰⁶ Concerning the history of education by missionaries and Korean Christian nationalists, see, Man-yol Lee, *The Cultural History of Christian Movement in Korea*, 178-298, Chapter III, "Korean Enlightenment and Modern Education".

¹⁰⁷ See, Sung-jun Lee, "Missionaries and Education in Chosun under the Japanese Rule", *The Journal of Korean Church History*, vol. 3, 178-221.

¹⁰⁸ Sung-jun Lee, *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁰⁹ Underwood reported on the studies of Korean students in America from 1912-1929, see, H. H. Underwood, "Korean Students in America and What They Bring Back", *The Korea Mission Field*,

Several highly educated Christian leaders led the independence movement from a Christian perspective, for instance President Elder Kim Ku of the government-in-exile, Elder Dr. Syngman Rhee, the first president of South Korea, Evangelist Dr. Ryu Un-hyung, the chairperson of the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence and Elder Dr. Kim Kyu-sik, the vice-president of the government-in-exile. As we already noted in Part One, seven out of the eight ministers at the beginning of the Korean government-in-exile, including the presidency itself, were Christians, and five of them were from the North. Even the two most important Communist leaders, Kim Il-sung and Park Hun-young, also had some Christian background.¹¹⁰

The Protestant Christians in Northern Korea, who were originally *minjung*, had begun to upgrade their social status through education. When Korea was liberated, they emerged as a new elite group and led the colonized nation in its struggle for independence. In sociological terms, they had formed a new petit bourgeois class in Northern society.

3.2 Politicized Protestantism and Its Ideological Choice

It was natural that the Korean Protestant leaders, a new social elite group in Korea who led the independence movement, had deep concerns for reconstruction of the fatherland. They believed that a new, unified and independent fatherland should be built in Korea, based on Christian thought.¹¹¹

Through the struggle between anti-Japanese and pro-Japanese attitudes during the colonial period, Protestant Christianity in North Korea had been highly politicized. With the opening of a new page of history, the Protestant Christian leaders immediately got involved in political activity and played a more active role than other comparable social and political groups in North Korea. It was through their leadership that the *Gunkuk Junbi Wiwonhoe* (建國準備委員會), the Committee for Preparation Korean Independence was organized. The central office

vol. 26, 1930, 67-72.

¹¹⁰ Kim had grown up in a Christian family and Park was the assistant of H. Underwood. Kim was the first Communists prime-Minister of North Korea, and Park was his deputy.

¹¹¹ "... to reform whole society based on Christian thought", The Platform of the Christian Social Democratic Party, 1945 in Heung-soo Kim ed., *A History of the Church in North Korea after the Liberation*, 54.

of this organization was in Seoul, but the provincial committees in North Korea were dominated by Presbyterian leaders. For instance, the chairperson of the Pyungnam Provincial Committee was Elder Cho Man-sik, the Hanghae Committee was led by Rev. Ung-soon Kim and the Pyungbook Committee was headed by Elder Yu-pil Lee.¹¹² At the county level, Christian leadership in this Committee was even more noticeable. Christians did not want to stay just as an advisor or cooperator but they expected to be leaders in the reconstruction of the nation. This Committee emerged as a powerful political organization in North Korea.

In ideology, being opposed to the Communists, the Christian politicians kept to the right. We can clearly read the ideological choice of Christians in the minutes of the inaugural assembly of the FPJP. The FPJP decided that, “the representatives of the Joint Presbytery shall be sent to South Korea to present our appreciation to the commander of the Allied Headquarters”,¹¹³ who had defeated the Japanese. However, they did not want to express the same sentiments to the Russian commander, who had done same thing in their territory. The representatives, the Very Rev. In-sik Lee and Rev. Yang-sun Kim, even met anti-Communist South Korean political leaders, such as Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, to discuss possibilities of political cooperation with them.¹¹⁴

H. Benninghoff, who was the political advisor of the USAMGIK, describes the political philosophy of protestant leaders in Korea in his report to Washington as follows:

Communists..... On the other hand, there is the so-called democratic or conservative group, which numbers among its members many of the professional and educational leaders who had been educated in the United States or in American missionary institutions in Korea. In their aims and policies they demonstrate a desire to follow western democracies.¹¹⁵

Obviously, northern Protestant Christians chose anti-Communism and western capitalism as the ideology on which to base the nation. There was a historical reason for this choice. As we already noted, after the mid-1920s, there had been several serious conflicts between the Christians and the Communists in Korea. North Korean Christians had been afraid of the atheism of the Communists. Against this background, they believed in capitalism as a

¹¹² IKCH ed., *A History of the Church in North Korea*, 384.

¹¹³ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 47-48.

¹¹⁴ Yang-sun Kim, *Ibid.*, 49; See also, A. Clark, *Op. Cit.*, 236.

¹¹⁵ “H. Bonninghoff to Secretary of State”, 15 September 1945; quoted from, B. Commings, *Op. Cit.*, 145.

Christian political and economical idea, which had been given by the missionaries with Gospel.¹¹⁶

Behind these historical causes, there were also economic reasons. S. Masahiko points out that a majority of the Christians preferred a capitalist system because they were the emerging elites, who owned lands in North Korea.¹¹⁷ In accordance with the above analysis of Christian class changes during the Japanese rule, it is likely that the ideological choice of the Christians was deeply connected to their economic interests, especially in regard to the issue of the land reform in 1946. Even though the majority of *minjung* in North Korea welcomed land reform, Christians were often victims of the policy, because as a result of it they lost their land.¹¹⁸

It is against this background that Christian participation in the Committee for Preparation of National Foundation developed, with Christian parties being organized to compete for political power with the Communists in North Korea.¹¹⁹

3.3 Christian Parties

3.3.1 Christian Social Democratic Party

After the liberation, Presbyterian Christians organized the first ever political party in Korean political history, the Christian Social Democratic Party, in November 1945. Rev. Ha-young Yun, the pastor of the First Shineuiju Presbyterian Church, and Rev. Kyung-jik Han, the pastor of the Second Shineuiju Presbyterian Church, were the leaders of the party and the members were mostly Christians in Pyungbuk Province. The political motto of the party was the establishment of democratic government on the basis of Christian thought.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Concerning Christian understanding on Communism in Japanese colonial period, see, Myung-sook Kang, "A Study of Korean Christian Understanding on Socialism, 1920-1940", Ph.D. thesis, Sukmyung Women's University, 1997.

¹¹⁷ S. Masahiko, "Christianity and Society in North Korea after the Liberation", Manuscript, Conference on Peaceful Reunification in Korea, November 1987, Sungsil University, Seoul, 13.

¹¹⁸ S. Masahiko, *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁹ In the South, Protestant Christians got involved in the Committee. However, it was not developed as Christian party. Here we can see how Presbyterian political engagement was strong in North Korea. See, Yong-bock Kim, "The Organization and Activity of the People's Committee in North Korea after Liberation", in *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History Before and After Liberation), 203-219.

¹²⁰ Heung-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 54.

In each district, with the church as a center, a district branch was organized. These branches became so strong that the Soviets soon became much concerned. Consequently, they brought in Korean Communists from Hamkyung Province and got them to set about “buying up the support of the common people of the area, the ignorant farmers and laborers”.¹²¹ This led to several conflicts between the Christians and the Communists. On the occasion of the inaugural meeting of the Ryongampo branch of the Party on 16th November 1945, the Communists stirred up the workers in a local factory to disturb the meeting. In the conflict that followed, Elder Suk-hwang Hong was killed and others injured.¹²²

After the Ryongampo incidents, about 5,000 Christian students from the local high schools in Shineuiju and other towns demonstrated with anger for a week in front of the local office of the Soviet Military Government. When the students tried to occupy the office, the soldiers fired and twenty-three Christian students were killed.¹²³ When the Soviets started to arrest the party executive members, most leaders and members evacuated to South Korea. This should be remembered as the first exodus of Northern Christians to the South.

Later, Rev. Han stated that he organized the party to struggle against the Communists.¹²⁴ He also preached that the purpose of the Party was to establish an anti-Communist Christian country like America, which had been blessed by God.¹²⁵ Moreover, he emphasized that “to prevent the dictatorship of the proletariat, we Christians should fight to break down Communism in North Korea”¹²⁶. He even went further by claiming, “Communism is the Red Dragon in the book of Revelation”, and asked, “Who will suppress this evil?”¹²⁷

While acknowledging that there were unfortunate clashes, we can still say that Han had a strong prejudice against Communism, judging negatively the Communist approach toward the new nation too early. According to Dong-kun Hong, his Christian Social Democratic Party

¹²¹ A. Clark, *Op. Cit.*, 240.

¹²² In-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 560.

¹²³ B. Commings, *The Origins of Korean War*, vol.2, 319.

¹²⁴ Kyung-jik Han, “A Memory of the First Liberation Day”, in *Mannam*, (The Encounter), 21st August, 1973.

¹²⁵ Kyung-jik Han, *Kunkuk kwa Kidokyo*, (National Reconstruction and Christianity), 148. Han and Yun, both of them studied in Princeton Theological Seminary during the 1920s.

¹²⁶ Kyung-jik Han, *Ibid.*, 196.

¹²⁷ Kyung-jik Han, *Ibid.*, 212.

represented a highly limited number of Shineuiju people, who were mostly Christian landlords.¹²⁸

As a consequence of the experiment of the Christian Social Democratic Party, three negative results entered into the relationship between the Christians and the Communists in North Korea. Firstly, the Communists began to consider the Christians as an anti-revolutionary group, who supported landlords. Secondly, anti-Communism among the Christians was strengthened as a result of the conflicts. Lastly, the church leaders in Shineuiju gave up their congregations and fled to the South. This flight allowed other Christians who had difficulties in North Korea to follow their church leaders to the South, without considering their mission in a Marxist land.

3.3.2 Christian Liberal Party

Meanwhile, in Pyongyang, a Christian Liberal Party was being organized by the Rev. Hwa-sik Kim, the vice-moderator of the FPJP and the chair of the trustee board of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary. It is significant that the leadership of the FPJP Assembly tried to organize this party. Most executive members of the Party were honorary officers of the Assembly and its member presbyteries.¹²⁹ According to Hwa-sik Kim, their political intention was to restrain the development of the Communist party by organizing a counter party.¹³⁰ This party was secretly prepared by the Presbyterians from November 1945. Later, however, most leaders of the reconstructed Methodist Church joined as well.¹³¹

The Christian Social Democratic Party had been locally based in Pyungbuk Province and existed for a short period only. However, the Christian Liberal Party was prepared for full cooperation with the FPJP of the Presbyterians and the Western Conference of the Methodists

¹²⁸ Dong-kun Hong participated the Shineuijoo demonstration and later evacuated to South with Rev. Han. He says, "Most Christians in Shineuijoo were landlords or small landlords". Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

¹²⁹ For example, Rev. Hwa-sik Kim, Rev. Yu-tack Lee, Rev. Kwan-joo Kim, Rev. Kyung-chun Woo and etc. IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 390.

¹³⁰ Institute for North Korean Studies ed., *Bukhan Sahoe eui Jaeinsik*, (A Re-recognition of North Korean Society), vol. 1, Seoul, Hanul, 1987, 415.

¹³¹ They were Bishop Jung-kun Song, Rev. Pi-duk Lee, Rev. Suk-ku Shin and etc. See, IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 390-391.

for the next two years. The preparatory committee of the Party also cooperated closely with the Korean Independence Party in South Korea.

In May 1947, at the Pyongyang Theological Seminary, a meeting of the main promoters of the venture was held and constitution and standing orders of the Party were drafted. However, the day before the organizational meeting was to have taken place, Rev. Kim and some 40 others were arrested. They therefore failed to establish the Party, and were accused on the charge of attempting a rebellion.¹³² The Communists suspected them because the leaders had close connections with the South Korean Government and Elder Hyun-suk Kim, the Chair of Cooperation of the Party, had supported terrorists who had thrown a bomb at Kim Il-sung.

Besides the Christian Liberal Party, we should also mention the Chosun Democratic Party, which was the biggest party until the end of 1946. Although it was not a Christian party, it should be remembered that the majority of its leaders were Christian. The remaining members of the Christian Democratic Party and the Christian Liberal Party joined the Chosun Democratic Party because its leader was Elder Cho Man-sik, a Presbyterian.

3.3.3 A Critical Assessment

J. Hromádka maintains that the relationship between church and secular society should be “unconfused and not yet indivisible”, borrowing rhetoric from Chalcedon.¹³³ When the church participates in political issues, the term “unconfused” means she should keep a critical and creative tension, not simply identifying with the state. Hromádka also emphasizes that the church should not withdraw to an inner ghetto by dualistically separating herself from political issues. Here the difficulty is to draw the borderline between mission to the public realm and political accommodation.

According to K. Barth, church and state were not to be understood as separated realms. The state is outside the church. However, it was not outside the range of Christ’s dominion. Here, proclaiming the Gospel is necessary even in the political arena. Nevertheless, he insists that Christian should enter the political arena “anonymously,” and not as a Christian party.¹³⁴ Barth

¹³² Institute for North Korean Studies ed., *Op. Cit.*, 420-421.

¹³³ J. Hromádka, *Looking History in the Face*, tr. by M. Pater, Madras, CLS, 1982, 19.

¹³⁴ K. Barth, *Against the Stream: Shorter Post-War Writings*, 1946-1952, London, SCM Press,

suggests a borderline of “anonymousness.” He might be afraid a so-called Christian party might compromise in such a way that it can no longer be called Christian, when it aims at achieving power and setting up a regime.

Protestant Christianity in North Korea was highly critical of the emerging Communist state power and its ideology. They chose a counter ideology, and set up political parties to compete for political power with the Communists. In this process, the Christians seemed to confuse the mission of churches with the political arena. In the light of Barth, the attempt to form Christian parties in North Korea can be regarded as an impatient and immature response of Protestant Christianity to political issues. The “anonymousness” means developing an approach to the political issues while keeping a distinctive Christian identity. However, the leaders of the Protestant churches in North Korea approached the political issues with secularized political parties, and confused the expression of Christian faith with the ideology of western capitalism.

A Korean theologian, Kyung-jae Kim evaluated the political engagement of the Protestant leaders positively, claiming they suffered for their intention to construct a democratic Christian nation in North Korea.¹³⁵ However, we must distinguish between the political witness of Korean churches identified with the suffering *minjung* in the late Chosun period, and the Christian attempt to win political power for the *petit bourgeois* in North Korea after the liberation.

The Christian attempt to organize political parties was considered by the Communists as a counter attack on their socialist revolution. Even the church was considered as an anti-revolutionary and reactionary social group, because of the parties. For this reason, the way in which the Christian parties competed for power caused persecution in North Korea. This argument will be more clear when we examine the following conflicts between the Christians and the Communists.

1954,21-34.

¹³⁵ Kyung-jae Kim, “Christianity and *Minjok* Movement in the Division Times”, Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development ed., *Nationalism and Christianity*, Seoul, Minjungsa, 1981, 106.

4. The Conflicts between the Christians and the Communists

4.1 A Short Honeymoon

At the beginning of the partition, it seems that the relationship between the Christians and the Communists was not bad. For evidence, when Kim Il-sung and his guerilla army came back with the Soviets to Pyongyang, the Protestant leaders invited Kim, Choi Young-gun and the commander of the Soviet Army and held a welcoming worship at the house of Elder Hyun-suk Kim, who was the Chair of Cooperation of the Christian Liberal Party. Although Hyun-suk Kim later supported an assassination attempt on Kim Il-sung and Yang-uk Kang,¹³⁶ relations seem to have been cordial at this stage. Furthermore, on the occasion of the “Pyongyang Civilian Welcoming Ceremony for General Kim Il-sung” on 14th October 1945, Elder Cho Man-sik introduced him, and other Christian leaders praised Kim’s leadership of the anti-Japanese guerilla struggle.¹³⁷ In response to this, Kim and the Soviet authorities confirmed that people would be enjoying full freedom of religion. Especially, Christians would be fully allowed to worship in church.¹³⁸

However, after the collision in November at Shineuijoo, the relationship between the Communists and the Christians started to break down. Even during the short honeymoon, the northern Christians were closer to the USAMGIK in the South than to Kim and the Soviet authorities.¹³⁹ Rev. Eun-kyun Hwang, a leader of FPJP, witnessed that the FPJP had regular secret communications with the USAMGIK.¹⁴⁰ In addition to the Shineuijoo affairs, and the

¹³⁶ Institute for North Korean Studies ed., *Op. Cit.*, 284.

¹³⁷ B. Commings, *Op. Cit.*, 401. “On the occasion, some 70,000 people turned out for a ceremony to welcome “General Kim Il Sung” back to Korea.”, *Haebang hu Samnyungan eui Chungyo Ilgi*, (Chronology of Important Events within Korea in the Three-year Period since Liberation), Pyongyang, Minju Chosunsa, 1948, 2. As a minor argument, Young-jin Oh asserts that most participants in the Ceremony realized that he was not the real General Kim Il-sung, the great independence movement leader, because he was too young. He was 33 years old. See, Jung-suk.Lee, *Hyundae Bukhan eui Ihae*, (A Recognition of Modern North Korea), Seoul, Yoksa Bipyungsa, 2000, 455-458. However, this must be the starting point of the invented theory which ignores Kim’s anti-Japanese leadership. In 2000 the Ministry of Reunification of the South Korean government officially recognized his leadership, for the first time. See, Ministry of Unification ed., *2000nyun Bukhan Gaeyo*, (Introduction to North Korea in 2000), Seoul, Ministry of Unification, 2000, 103.

¹³⁸ Statement of the Soviet 25th Army Commander, 12 October 1945.

¹³⁹ Byung-uk Jang, *6.25 Gongsan Namchim kwa Kyohoe*, (The Korean War and Church), Seoul, Hankuk Kyoyuk Kongsu, 1983, 37.

¹⁴⁰ IKCH, *Op. Cit.*, 393.

establishing of Christian parties, this pro-American approach could also stimulate Kim's hostility.

When the Moscow Conference of foreign ministers of the US, the USSR and Great Britain agreed multilateral trusteeship in Korea for up to five years on 16th December 1945,¹⁴¹ the relation between the Christians and the Communists came unstuck. The Communists agreed to the trusteeship because they understood that anti-trusteeship would cause the division of the nation. However, the Christians organized a massive anti-trusteeship campaign in cooperation with South Koreans, because they understood the trusteeship as a new colonial rule.¹⁴²

4.2 Conflicts

4.2.1 Memorial Ceremony of March First Independence Movement

From the beginning of 1946, the tension between the Christians and the Communists increased on the issue of the trusteeship. The Christian leaders who understood the trusteeship as a revival of colonial rule planned to hold the Memorial Worship of the March First Independence Movement (MFIM) as an anti-trusteeship and anti-Communist campaign. They intended to connect the Christian mass commemoration of the MFIM with their political slogan of anti-trusteeship.¹⁴³

On the other hand, the Provisional People's Committee in North Korea also intended to hold a big memorial ceremony in the newly liberated nation. When the Committee realized that the FJPJ planned a separate ceremony, they proposed to hold it jointly. However, the FJPJ rejected the proposal because they did not want to work with the Communists.¹⁴⁴ Due to this rejection, the Provisional People's Committee suddenly arrested the fifty-five leaders of the FJPJ on 26 February in 1946. Most historians insist that the Committee arrested the leaders to prevent the Christians from holding their separate ceremony.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Concerning the Moscow Conference, see, Myung-rim Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins*, vol. 2, Seoul, Nanam, 1996, 136-148.

¹⁴² Concerning Christian position on trusteeship, see, Won-ryong Kang, *Binduleseo*, (Won-ryong Kang's Autobiography), Seoul, Yulin Munhwa, 1993, 175-190.

¹⁴³ IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 394.

¹⁴⁴ Yang-sun Kim who was the moderator of the *Pyungbuk* Presbytery confirmed this in his book, *Op. Cit.*, 63.

¹⁴⁵ See, Heung-soo Kim, "Political Characteristics of the Church in North Korea After the Liberation",

However, we need to note that the Presbyterian Youth Conference held from 23rd-25th February 1946, Pyongyang, had also demonstrated a strong anti-Communist reaction.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, a fundamental reason behind the arrest was not only to disturb the Christian ceremony, but also to prevent another anti-Communist campaign through the MFIM memorial worship.

In practice, this arrest poured oil into the burning anti-Communist fire among the Christians. About 10,000 Christians gathered at the Jangdaehyun Presbyterian Church on 1st March 1946. Thousands of young Christian men protected the congregation because the police of the Provisional People's Committee asked that the worship cease. In his sermon, Rev. Eun-kyun Hwang, who had connections with the USAMGIK, asserted that North Korea was becoming a land of the Bolshevik who is atheist and materialist, and he encouraged Christian youth to struggle against them as follows:

Now, a rebellion is inevitable in North Korea. We are facing a war between the North and the South. There will be a war between theist and atheist, democracy and proletariat dictatorship. Shall we, Christian youth, give the initiative of national reconstruction to the Communists and to their party? Absolutely not! We must fight for a just war to keep our freedom of faith like the Crusades in the medieval age.¹⁴⁷

Here we can see that in his sermon, Communism was considered as an unacceptable satanic idea. The ideologically captured minister proclaimed a war, not a peace, without any reasonable consideration of the new situation in the pulpit. Here, we can find that the opposition paradigm between church and state in the issue of the *Shinto* shrine worship was uncritically adopted and inserted into the Communist context in North Korea after the liberation. S. Masahiko points out that the worship event was a kind of anti-Communist political demonstration, rather than proper worship as such.¹⁴⁸

After his inflammatory sermon, the congregation decided to have three days of prayer and fasting. However, when the members of Red Guard took out Rev. Hwang to arrest him after

in Heung-soo Kim ed., *A History of the Church in North Korea after the Liberation*, 56; Yang-sun Kim, *A Decade History of the Liberation of the Korean Church*, 63; In-soo Kim, *A History of the Christian Church in Korea*, 561. S. Masahiko, *A Study on the History of the Southern and Northern Churches*, 234; Kwang-soo Kim, *A History of Christianity in Northern Korea*, 218.

¹⁴⁶ Institute for North Korean Studies, *Op. Cit.*, 395.

¹⁴⁷ After this accident, he evacuated to the South and published his sermon. Eun-kyun Hwang, "The 38th Parallel and Christian Youth", in *Buheung*, (The Revival), vol. 8, 1948, 4.

¹⁴⁸ S. Masahiko, *Op. Cit.*, 233.

the worship, an angry crowd of 5,000 Christians started a demonstration which headed towards the Head Office of the Soviet Army, shouting “anti-trusteeship, anti-Communist and freedom of faith”.¹⁴⁹ There were also several collisions between the Christian youth and the Red Guard during this march.

At first glance, this demonstration occurred by accident because of the Red Guard. However, in fact, FPJP leaders carefully prepared it to achieve political hegemony in North Korea. As evidence, firstly, it should be noted that similar demonstrations, followed by similar collisions, happened in several cities on that same day. Secondly, Yang-sun Kim, who was one of the leaders of the FPJP, stated that the Christians participating in the worship brought crosses and the former national flag (now the flag of South Korea since 1946) for the demonstration.¹⁵⁰

On account of this pre-organized demonstration, the Communists got confirmation of their negative understanding of Christianity in North Korea. For the Communists, Protestant Christianity in North Korea seemed to be a religion of the bourgeoisie who preferred the South Korean regime, not the northern *minjung*.

4.2.2 Christian Complicity in the Attempted Assassination of Kim Il-sung

Apart from the analysis of most historians, who maintain the Communists’ responsibility for causing the collision on 1st March 1946, the Christians clearly had some responsibility as well. The bombing terror against Kim Il-sung during the Ceremony held by the People’s Committee is another incident that needs to be considered. So far historians have failed to dig out the details of the assassination attempt, and have not sufficiently examined possible Christian involvement in it.

According to V. Suhanin, the Russian ambassador in 1946, in his interview with *The Hankyeore*,¹⁵¹ there was an attempt to assassinate Kim Il-sung at the Ceremony. A group of young people threw a hand grenade at Kim. However, J. Novichenko,¹⁵² the Russian military

¹⁴⁹ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 67.

¹⁵⁰ Yang-sun Kim, *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵¹ “Interview with the former Russian ambassador in North Korea”, *The Hankyeore*, 26 November 1999.

¹⁵² Kim Il-sung delivered birthday gifts to him every year through the North Korean Embassy in Moscow. Especially, Kim Il-sung invited him to Pyongyang and put a decoration on him in 1984.

officer, protected him, losing his right arm in the process. This assassination attempt occurred at 8:30 a.m. at the Pyongyang Station Square. The terrorists were Sung-yul Lee, Hyung-jip Kim, Ki-sung Choi and Hee-du Lee, who were members of the Korean Independence Party in the South.¹⁵³

Kwang-soo Kim reported that even though the terrorists were members of the Korean Independence Party, Elder Hyun-suk Kim¹⁵⁴ and other Christian Youth leaders, Du-byung Kim, Won-bok Kim, Eui-hong Kang and Jun-sam Chun, helped to plan and supported the attempted assassination. Elder Kim even hid the terrorists in his house after it had failed.¹⁵⁵ Some of leaders of the FPJP and the Christian Liberal Party were thus deeply involved in the attempt to assassinate Kim Il-sung. The Communists also had a strong doubt that some anti-Communist Christian leaders had been engaged in the assassination attempt.¹⁵⁶ However, they had no evidence, because they failed to arrest the terrorists.¹⁵⁷

It is highly significant that the terror happened at 8:30 a.m. at the People's Committee Ceremony, and the Christian Memorial Worship started at 10:00 a.m. The Red Guard who came from the Pyongyang Station, the terrorized place, must have been extremely upset because they had a suspicion that the Christians were behind what had happened.¹⁵⁸ In this context, Rev. Hong's sermon and the following demonstration was very provocative for the Communists, pushing them to take strong action.

Ibid.

¹⁵³ The Society for Promoting Korean Reunification ed., *Bukhan Bangong Tujaengsa*, (A History of the Anti-Communist Movement in North Korea), Seoul, The Society for Promoting Korean Reunification, 1970, 167-170. C.f., *The Joongangilbo* reports that the attempt was at 11:00 a.m., and the terrorists were Jung-eui Kim, Hyung-jip Kim, Kee-sung Choi. See, *The Joongangilbo*, 22nd February 2002.

¹⁵⁴ He was a leader of FPJP and Chair of Co-operations of the Christian Liberal Party. Once he invited Kim Il-sung and Soviet commanders to his home for a meal and welcoming service in 1945. C.f. *The Joongangilbo* reports that Elder Min-kyu Hong of Jangdaehyun Church provided his house and financial support for the terrorists. See, *The Joongangilbo*, 22nd February 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 224.

¹⁵⁶ See, "A Biography of Rev. Yang-uk Kang", *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 24th; 27th June 1987.

¹⁵⁷ C.f., *The Joongangilbo* reports that Hyung-Jip Kim was arrested, but he exercised the right of silence See, *The Joongangilbo*, 22nd February 2002.

¹⁵⁸ N.B., Even if the attempt was at 11:00 a.m. as *The Joongangilbo* reported, the situation must be similar.

However, it was not a single attempt. After twelve days, the members of the *Seobuk Chungnyun Dan* or North West Youth League in the South,¹⁵⁹ attempted to assassinate Rev. Yang-uk Kang (1904-1983), a leader of the Christian socialists, on 13th March. Most members of the League were Christian youth who had evacuated from the North, after the Shineuijoo collision.¹⁶⁰ The terrorists were “financially supported and given a shelter by Elder Min-kyu Hong,”¹⁶¹ who was an Elder of Jangdaehyun Presbyterian Church¹⁶² in Pyongyang. Moreover, they cooperated with the former members of the Christian Social Democratic Party in planning and executing the assassination attempt.¹⁶³

The terrorists threw a hand bomb into Rev. Kang’s bedroom at midnight. On the day, he had two visitors, Rev. Duk-ho Kim and Rev. Byung-jik Kang, who were Christian socialists. They had come to discuss the Christian perspective on the issue of land reform.¹⁶⁴ The beloved first son of Kang, Young-hae who was 22 years old, and the two ministers were killed instead of him that night, because Kang had given his bedroom to his friends.¹⁶⁵ Kang’s first daughter also died that night. Kwang-soo Kim claims that the visitor was Rev. Jong-sung Kim. However, Elder Se-yong Kang, the daughter of Byung-jik Kang witnesses, “there were two visitors on the night, my father and Rev. Duk-ho Kim”.¹⁶⁶

Rev. Yang-uk Kang, the chairperson of the NKCA, was an important leader of the Christian socialists with Rev. Chang-joon Kim, who was in the South at that time. He had been the teacher of Kim Il-sung at the Changduk Christian Primary School, which Kim’s grandfather-in-law had established. Later, Kim remembered that Kang had influenced him encouraging his nationalistic patriotism for the colonized fatherland and reminding him to love the *minjung*

¹⁵⁹ They were Sung-yul Lee, Eui-ho Choi, Ki-sung Choi and Hee-ju Lee, Institute for North Korean Studies, *Bukhan Minju Tongil Undongsa*, (A History of Democratic Reunification Movement in North Korea), vol. 1, Seoul, Institute for North Korean Studies, 1990, 296. C.f., According to *The Joongangilbo*, they were Jung-eui Kim, Jae-kuk Jo, Ki-sung Choi, and Sung-ryul Lee. See, *The Joongangilbo*, 22nd February 2002.

¹⁶⁰ IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 395.

¹⁶¹ IKCH ed., *Ibid.*

¹⁶² The minister was Rev. Hwa-sik Kim, the founder of the Christian Liberal Party and the vice-moderator of the FPJP.

¹⁶³ Institute for North Korean Studies, *Op. Cit.*, 284.

¹⁶⁴ *The Pyongyang Shinmmon*, 24th June 1987.

¹⁶⁵ The second son who was 17 years old was Rev Young-sup Kang, the current chairperson of the KCF. Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan; 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Elder Se-yong Kang, 6th April 2001, Okryu House Church, Pyongyang.

who were suffering under Japanese rule.¹⁶⁷ When the North Korean government was established in 1947, Kang became the secretary general of the SPA.

For the Christians colored by anti-Communism, Kang was not seen as a pastor. They thought Christianity and socialism could not co-exist. They might also have been afraid that Kang's influence could convince the Christian *minjung* of socialism, because he was a "highly respected leader and famous preacher"¹⁶⁸ in the northern Presbyterian Church. For these reasons, Kang was the next target for the assassination, after Kim Il-sung. These assassination attempts brought about the rapid spread of anti-Christian antipathy among the Communists in North Korea.

4.2.3 The Issue of the Election on the Sunday Sabbath

Even though the collision in March 1946 was serious, it was a local conflict in Pyongyang and Shineuijoo. However, in the autumn of 1946, when the whole country was excited by an election for the establishment of the new state, the conflict between the Christians and the Communists developed on a national scale in North Korea.

On 5th September 1946, the Provisional People's Committee in North Korea announced a law for establishing the National People's Committee as a people's regime through election. The Committee announced the Election Day for Sunday, 3rd November 1946. In addition, the Committee mobilized church buildings as voting points and places for mass propaganda for the election.¹⁶⁹

However, in response, the FPJP announced the following statement and delivered it to the Committee on 20th October 1946.

The 2,000 churches and 300,000 Christians, for the preservation of the faith and the progress of the Church, having approved the following five principles for the government of the Church and as rules for Christian living, wish to inform the People's Committee of these principles, hoping for their kind co-operation:

¹⁶⁷ Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa dubuleo*, (With a Century: Kim Il-sung's Autobiography), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1992, 88-89.

¹⁶⁸ Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 225.

¹⁶⁹ The Center for the Study of History ed., *Chosun Tongsa*, (A History of Chosen), Pyongyang, The Institute for Social Science; reprinted by Seoul, Owol, 1989, 328.

1. Keeping the Sabbath day holy is of the life of the Church, so there should be no attendance at any activities except worship on the Lord's Day.
2. Politics and religion should be distinctly separated.
3. The respect for the Deity in the church building is the proper duty of the church, so that the use of church building for other purpose than worship is forbidden.
4. In the event that an acting church minister enters the field of politics, he must resign his office in the church.
5. The church stands for freedom of religion and of assembly. ¹⁷⁰

Even though this statement was “for the government of the church and as rules for Christian living”, it was a statement on the issue of church and state which rejected cooperation for the establishment of the Communist government in North Korea through the election. At bottom, the statement emphasizes a fundamental approach to church and state issues based on a clear paradigm of separation. However, in the detail, the articles contain some contradictions, which was counter to the reality that northern Protestantism was already politicized. For example, the church buildings had been centers for mass education and civil meetings in Northern Korea. In the MFIM, most anti-Japanese political gatherings had been held in the churches. Moreover, a considerable number of Protestant Christian leaders were involved as political leaders of the Committee for the Preparation of National Foundation, and of the political parties that followed from it. However, they had not been required to resign any ecclesiastical offices on account of their political participation. The officers of the FPJP at the time of announcing the Statement were themselves, even at that point in time, organizing the Christian Liberal Party.

In the statement, the key issue for the Christians was said to be that of the Sabbath. They interpreted the Sabbath narrowly, as in the Old Testament. The Christians thought that the Communists scheduled the election on a Sunday to disturb Christian activities.¹⁷¹ Therefore, the Pyungseo Presbytery announced a stronger statement the next day, as follows:

1. We will boycott the general election on the Lord's Day, 3rd November 1946.
2. The Provisional People's Committee must clarify a hidden intention of the election on Sunday. Change the date right now! ¹⁷²

Keeping the Sabbath is highly important in Christian life. However, in general, it has been natural to hold some national business on Sunday in East Asia, where there is no concept of the Sabbath in the people's traditional religions.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 68.

¹⁷¹ A. Clark, *Op. Cit.*, 242.

¹⁷² IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 398-399.

The Communists took the Christian opposition to the election seriously. Kim Il-sung, the secretary general of the Provisional People's Committee, invited ten Protestant leaders, who were close friends of his father, Kim Hyung-jik, at the Sungsil Christian Secondary School, to his house. Here is a record of their conversation on the election:

Kim: Why do you oppose the general election? I think that the election of people's representatives is good for democracy of this country.

Ministers: We agree that the election is good but we cannot participate in it on Sunday Sabbath.

Kim: In the Bible, Jesus said that we can do ordinary activities on the Sabbath, if they have a good purpose. As you know, the Pharisee who criticized what Jesus did on the Sabbath was finally shamed. If the general election is good for the people, there is no reason to reject it because of its date. Do you also elect elders and deacons on Sunday? Don't you?

Ministers: Yes, we do.

Kim: I believe that there is no religion which is against something good for the people because believers also love their fatherland and people. Please, participate in the election, which is such a good activity. This is the first time in Korean history to elect representatives of the people for the government by the people.¹⁷⁴

Hence, we can say that at first Kim Il-sung and the Committee tried to persuade the Protestant leaders, who were from the educated elites in North Korea. However, the leaders did not alter their decision. Rather, they strengthened it, continuing to deliver the anti-election decision to the local congregations. This approach caused an aggressive reaction from the Communists. Kim spoke on 1st November 1946 as follows:

Rejecting general election is trying to give another colonial yoke to the people... They are those who do not agree with the sovereignty of the people... There are some Christian ministers who are against the election. However, if they are patriotic ministers, they should not reject it. They use their religious cult or doctrine as an excuse. In fact, it is not for their religious intention, but they must have some other purpose. I affirm that there is full religious freedom in North Korea. I have a suspicion that the Protestant ministers who are against the election could be a spy of the enemy.¹⁷⁵

From this, it seemed that Kim and his followers might have no more expectations of the Christians, and they could be ready to do something drastic. In this context of tension, the

¹⁷³ Most important national certificate examinations and governmental memorial ceremonies are still being held on Sunday in South Korea, Japan and China. It is of interest that there is a conservative ecumenical solidarity organization for ceasing the governmental ceremonies and examinations on Sunday in South Korea.

¹⁷⁴ N.B. The author reproduced the record of the dialogue in *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 27 June 1987.

¹⁷⁵ Kim Il-sung's speech, "Toward a Historic General Election", 1 November 1946, Pyongyang; in his book, *Kim Il-sung Jangun Jungyo Nonmoonjip*, (Selective Writings of General Kim Il-sung), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1948, 133-134.

Preparatory Committee of the Christian Association, which had been started by some Christian socialists in June 1946, made a statement based on an entirely different approach.

1. We fully support the Kim Il-sung government.
2. We do not recognize the South Korean regime.
3. The Church vows to be leader for the *minjung*.
4. Therefore, the Church participates in the election on its own initiative.¹⁷⁶

However, this approach represented a small minority in northern Protestantism in 1946.¹⁷⁷ On 3rd November 1946, the day of the election, the moderator of Pyungseo Presbytery, Yang-sun Kim noted that a large majority of congregations of the FPJP boycotted the election.¹⁷⁸ They did not go to their homes after Sunday worship, but had prayer meetings until midnight for protection from the “Red Dragon”. The Provisional People’s Committee therefore extended the election until the next Monday morning, to give an opportunity for the Christians to vote.¹⁷⁹

However, already it was not a matter of date for the Christians. “The Christians were ready to be martyred for eternal kingdom in Heaven,”¹⁸⁰ as their ancestors had done against the Japanese idolatry. Here, we can find that the opposition paradigm between church and state in the issue of *Shinto* Shrine worship influenced the new situation. From the beginning, Protestant Christianity in Korea had a mono paradigm of church-state relations based on conflict, since it had opposed both the monarchy and the Japanese state. Therefore, the Protestant Christians were not familiar with the idea they could cooperate with state power in North Korea, even although Kim Il-sung’s group had fought in the frontline of the independence struggle.

On the other hand, acting differently from what they had done on the issue of shrine worship, in this case, the “Lapsed leaders” within the FPJP led the boycott of the election. They did so for two reasons. Some were afraid of the Communists’ political slogans about “the clearance

¹⁷⁶ Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 69.

¹⁷⁷ Hee-jung Kwak, Ung Lee, Young-chul Shin, Ik-hyun Shim, Shi-san Ra, Duk-young Pyo, Chi-kun Kim, who were mostly from Hwanghae province, led this statement. See, Yang-sun Kim, *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷⁸ Yang-sun Kim, *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷⁹ See, Kim Il-sung, “The Results of the General Election and the Emerging Tasks of the People’s Committee”, 25 November 1946, *Kim Il-sung Jangun Jungyo Nonmoonjip*, (Selective Writings of General Kim Il-sung), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1948, 143-170.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

of Japanese legacy” and “judgment of the pro-Japanese,”¹⁸¹ while others felt guilt for their cooperation with the Japanese. Therefore, they wanted to recover their orthodoxy by rejecting the Communist government.

In conclusion, the Protestant leaders misinterpreted the meaning of the separation of church and state as an anti-Communist struggle. They failed to distinguish the church from politics because their strong anti-Communist position also had a political intention. Theologically, northern Protestantism rejected the election from a puritan perspective on the issue of the Sabbath and church-state relations. However, political, economical and socio-historical motives were mixed in, and lay behind their rejection.

4.3 Land Reform: A Key Factor

The conflict between the Christians and the Communists in North Korea was caused mainly by an ideological confrontation. However, behind this conflict, the Christians were also concerned about disadvantage they would experience as a result of the social transformation program of the Communists. Land reform was a key issue here. This was one of the factors in the confrontation.

4.3.1 The Democratic Reformation

As soon as Kim Il-sung’s Communist guerilla came back to North Korea, they introduced a reforming program in order to develop a socialist revolution in North Korea.¹⁸² The program was not put forward as if it could be completed in one go. Rather, it would develop bit by bit, in a sequence.

¹⁸¹ See, Soon-kyung Park, *Minjok Tongil kwa Kidokyo*, (Reunification of Nation and Christianity), Seoul, Hankilsa, 1986, 140-142.

¹⁸² Concerning the Democratic Reformation, see, Kim Il-sung, *Kim Il-sung Jangun Juyo Nonmunjip*, (The Selective Essays of the General Kim Il-Sung), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1948, 16-154; as secondary sources, see, Jung-suk Lee, *Hyundai Bukhan eui Yihae*, (A Understanding Modern North Korea), Seoul, Yoksa Bipyongsa, 2000, 68-74; In-ho Ryu, “The Process and Characteristics of the Land Reform after the Liberation”, in Kun-ho Song et al., *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of the Liberation History), Seoul, Hankilsa, 1979, 371-445; B. Commings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1981, 252-262; H. Tralim, “Land Reform in North Korea”, *Amerasia*, vol. 11, 1947, 55-60; R. Scalapino and C. Lee, *Communism in Korea: The Movement*, vol. 2, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972, 435-446.

On 8th February 1946, on the occasion of the Joint Gathering of the Political Parties and Social Organizations in North Korea, Kim Il-sung suggested the “Anti-Imperial, Anti-Feudal Revolution”¹⁸³ as an urgent task for the Communist revolution to accomplish in North Korea.¹⁸⁴ The North Korean Communists understood that clearing the remains of Japanese colonialism, and the pro-Japanese landlords, was a highly important task on the way toward building up a Communist society in North Korea.

For this purpose, he organized the Provisional People’s Committee in North Korea. The committee enacted several laws before the general election such as “The Law on Land Reform” on 5th March, “The Labor Law” on 20th June, “The Law on Equality of Women and Men” on 30th July and “The Law for General Election” on 5th September in 1946.¹⁸⁵ Kim Il-sung summarized the purpose of the laws as: 1) to reform land, and nationalize key industries, taking them out of the hands of pro-Japanese people and landlords, 2) to secure the rights of labor and women, 3) to establish a people’s regime through democratic election and 4) to develop a people’s economy.¹⁸⁶

In spite of his ambitious plan, the democratic reformation program faced serious challenges from the Christians. In politics, the Christians rejected the general election. In economy, the Christians resisted the program of land reform, which was against the personal interests of many of them, as well as the plan for the nationalization of key industries. This was related to the church’s desire to keep its mission properties, including its hospitals and schools.

4.3.2 Nationalization of Key Industries and the Protestant Churches

According to the Law of the Nationalization of Key Industries, schools and hospitals were also objects of nationalization, under the category of social facilities.¹⁸⁷ The Nationalization would confiscate individual properties from North Korean people due to the Communist

¹⁸³ Scapino and Lee maintain that the revolution had a mixed nature falling between the bourgeois democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, because Kim followed Mao’s Neo-Democracy(新民主主義). *Communism in Korea: The Movement*, 437.

¹⁸⁴ Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 68.

¹⁸⁵ R. Scapino and C. Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 437-445.

¹⁸⁶ KWP, *Chosun Junang Nyungam*, (Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1949, 63, Ministry of Unification Archival no. 488.

¹⁸⁷ See, The Provisional Peoples Committee, “The 20 Political Principles”, in Kim Il-sung, *Kim Il-sung Sunjip*, (Selective Writings of Kim Il-sung), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1963, 54-57.

economic idea. However, we need to note that “ninety percent of all industry belonged to Japanese individuals or corporations.”¹⁸⁸ Indeed, the Nationalization of Key Industries was urgently necessary in North Korea after the liberation, so as to retain these industries to Korean control.

As we already noted, when Korea was liberated 80% of all hospitals and schools in North Korea were managed by the northern Protestant churches.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, the Communist policy of Nationalization of Key Industries was a serious challenge for the churches. It was not only an issue of property but posed problems for carrying out their Christian mission. The northern churches understood that the nationalization of schools and hospitals meant losing their strongest mission tools and strategy. However, from the Communist point of view, education and health service were key social infra structures for establishing a socialist society in North Korea.

To avoid this, the Christians tried to prevent the establishment of a Communist government in North Korea. The Christians thought establishing an alternative government would be the best way to keep the churches’ properties for mission, through organizing Christian political parties. When this aggressive method failed, they chose the method of boycotting the general election, which was the next most powerful resistance.

However, the issue of Nationalization of Key Industries was not as serious for the Christians as that of land reform. In practice, the Christian schools and hospitals were only gradually nationalized from 1947 onwards.¹⁹⁰

4.3.3 Land Reform and Christian Elites

Different to the issue of the nationalization of key industries, the land reform in North Korea was developed rapidly. In his speech of 8th February 1946, which inaugurated the Provisional People’s Committee, Kim Il-sung spoke of the need for a thoroughgoing renovation of the “feudal” land situation in the North.¹⁹¹ He pointed out that only 5% of the entire land was in

¹⁸⁸ A. Strong, “North Korea”, *The New Statesman and Nation*, vol. 35. No. 880, 17 January 1948, 47.

¹⁸⁹ In-chul Kang, “A Recognition of Modern Religious History in North Korea”, in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Op. Cit.*, 149.

¹⁹⁰ IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 408.

¹⁹¹ Kim Il-sung, *Kim Il-sung Jangun Jungyo Nonmoonjip*, (Selective Writings of General Kim Il-sung),

the hands of the farmers in North Korea. On the contrary, 95% was controlled by Japanese and pro-Japanese landlords.¹⁹²

In March, the northerners attacked the problem at its roots, at the bottom of Korean society, in the villages. In so doing, they broke the power both of a landed class of centuries' duration and of the pro-Japanese. They accomplished this by organizing those with the least to lose, making poor peasant and agricultural laborers the shock troops in some 11,500 rural committees organized, under people's committee aegis, to push reform through.¹⁹³

As later happened with the Chinese land reforms, "anti-traitor" meetings were held, and reform enforcement regulations stated that all peasants must participate in compiling a list of individuals who would have their land confiscated, "in order to expose pro-Japanese". Absentee landlords had their land confiscated for redistribution, unless they had also engaged in anti-Japanese resistance. A total of 4,751 landlord households had their land taken, although most of them were allowed to either keep 5 *Chongbo*¹⁹⁴ or 49,587 square meters.¹⁹⁵ Land was also confiscated from previous Japanese holdings and various public institutions and churches, and was then distributed as follows:

Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1948, 16.

¹⁹² Kim Il-sung, *Ibid.*, 9; Concerning Japanese land exploitation in Korea, see, E. Gragert, *Landownership under Colonial Rule: Korea's Japanese Experience, 1900-1935*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

¹⁹³ Kim Il-sung, "The Results of the Agrarian Reform and Future Tasks", *Selective Works*, vol. 1, Pyongyang, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1971, 35-55; "Land Reform in North Korea", *Amerasia*, vol. 11, 1947, 55-60.

¹⁹⁴ 1 *Chongbo* is 106,194 square feet or 9,917 square meters.

¹⁹⁵ If landlords had already voluntarily given up their land, they were allowed to keep their homes and 5 *Chongbo*. For richer peasants who worked their own land, the emphasis was placed on whether the land was used 'parasitically', determined on the basis of the amount of land rented out to tenants. Thus if an individual owned seven *Chongbo*, worked four *Chongbo*, and rented out the remainder, only the rented three *Chongbo* would be confiscated. On the other hand, if all seven were rented, all would be taken for redistribution. A peasant who worked all seven would keep all his land, even though this exceeded the stipulated five *Chongbo* limit. Redistribution to tenants was based on a points system in which males from 18-60 would get one point, females from 18-50 one point, youths from 15-17, 0.7 points, and children 0.5 points. The village reform committees then reapportioned land on the basis of total points for each family and differences in the quality of the land provided to them. See, B. Commings, *The Origins of Korean War*, vol. 1, 415.

Table 8) Redistribution of Land in North Korea¹⁹⁶

Category	No. of Households	Amount of Land Received
Landless peasants	407,307	583,304 <i>Chongbo</i>
Smallholding peasants	255,993	336,039 <i>Chongbo</i>
Agricultural laborers	5,540	14,855 <i>Chongbo</i>
Landlords moved to other counties	3,911	9,622 <i>Chongbo</i>

According to official American sources, this North Korean land reform was achieved in a less violent manner than that in China and North Vietnam. “From all accounts, the former village leaders were eliminated as a political force without resort to bloodshed, but extreme care was taken to preclude their return to power.”¹⁹⁷ American intelligence reports at the time also noted the lack of violence.¹⁹⁸ It was amazing that the North Korean Communists completed the land reform within one month of announcing the law, and within two months of establishing the Provisional People’s Committee.

In his report on 10th April 1946, Kim Il-sung summarized the historical meaning of land reform in North Korea as follows. Firstly, North Korea achieved a fundamental basis for achieving the task of people’s democracy through land reform. Secondly, the North Korean Communists obtained people’s support through land reform. Lastly, the land reform in North Korea, which was the first in Asia, was significant not only for the people in the Korean peninsula but also for democracy in Asia.¹⁹⁹

In fact, it was unique that the land reform in North Korea was bloodless and had wide support from the people.²⁰⁰ Even, after the land reform, there were ubiquitous posters saying, “thank you, General Kim Il-sung” for the land.²⁰¹ However, Kim Il-sung also criticized several problems in practicing the land reform as follows: Firstly, he pointed out opportunism

¹⁹⁶ The account here is taken from Minjujuewi Minjok Chosun ed., *Chosun Haebang illyunsa*, (History of the First Year of Korean Liberation), Seoul, Munuinseogwan, 1946, 431-432; 439-440.

¹⁹⁷ US State Department, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Takeover*, Washington, D.C., US State Department, 1961, 57.

¹⁹⁸ See, B. Commings, *Op. Cit.*, 416.

¹⁹⁹ Kim Il-sung, “The Results of Land Reform”, in *Kim Il-sung Jangun Jungyo Nonmoonjip*, (Selective Writings of General Kim Il-sung), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1948, 16-18.

²⁰⁰ Mao later criticized this sort of practice, arguing that it worked against the task of raising peasant consciousness and getting peasants to struggle for their own rewards. Mao termed this North Korean practice “favor-ism”, that is, bestowing “graceful favors” on the masses from on high. See, Mao Tse-tung, *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought, 1949-1968*, vol. 2, Washington, D.C., Joint Publications Research Service, 1970, 34; 106.

²⁰¹ Bong Baik, *Kim Il Sung: A Political Biography*, vol. 2, New York, Guardian Books, 1970, 128.

because some Communist party members sold their land just before the land reform. Secondly, there were cases of land under 5 *Chongbo* being confiscated. Lastly, due to lack of education, some farmers menaced landlords and plundered their properties. Kim defined this tendency, as an inclination to the left, because he believed the former landlords should still be allowed to possess 5 *Chongbo* for their daily economy.²⁰² However, it must be a horrible memory to landlords who had their land confiscated. Already, a large number of Korean landlords, mostly pro-Japanese, had fled to the South when the Law was announced.²⁰³

The church land was no exception to the reform. Kim Il-sung thought if there was an exception, land reform could fail. Therefore, he included every sort of land for reforming and for redistribution, including even land holding by the Communists. The one exception he made was for landlords who had supported the independence movement. Here is the rule for operation on the land of religious institutions:

Bylaw, Chapter II. 7: According to the article 3. d of the Land Reform Law, the land of churches, temples and other religious organizations which is over the 5 *Chongbo* should be confiscated. This article is restricted only for the land, which is cultivated by the peasants or the employed for a purpose of exploitation. This article does not apply to the land of churches, temples and other religious organizations which they are cultivating themselves.

Example) If a church cultivates 3 *Chongbo* by themselves and let 6 *Chongbo* rent to tenant farmers, only the 6 *Chongbo* land should be confiscated.²⁰⁴

Due to this rule the Provisional People's Committee confiscated the land of churches, temples and other religious organizations. It was only 1.4% (15,195 *Chongbo*) of the total confiscated land (1,066,246 *Chongbo*), and most of the land confiscated from religious organizations had been Buddhist.²⁰⁵ Therefore, at first glance, it seems as if the confiscation of land was not a serious issue for the Christians.

However, if we go on to consider Christians as individuals, a different result comes out. As we have seen, the Protestant Christians in North Korea upgraded their social class during Japanese rule, through education. They often ceased to be *minjung*, and become an elite. Usually, social elites in Korea have had land as a method of keeping their wealth, because

²⁰² Kim Il-sung, "The Results of Land Reform", *Op. Cit.*, 25-26.

²⁰³ B. Commings, *Op. Cit.*, 416.

²⁰⁴ The Rules for Operation of Land Reform: On the Land of Religious Institutions, 5 March 1946, The Provisional People's Committee

²⁰⁵ Kim Il-sung, "The Results of Land Reform", *Op. Cit.*, 22.

Korea was an agricultural society. This was still the case in the 1940s. There were three major groups of landlords in Korea at the time of the land reform issue, namely traditional landlords, pro-Japanese landlords and Christian elites. However, the majority of the traditional landlords were in the South, and the pro-Japanese landlords had already fled there too when the Law was announced. That means the Christian elites were the most victimized landlord group when land reform was actually put into practice.²⁰⁶

The Christian elite did not inherit their land from their fathers, and they had not been awarded it by the colonial powers due to anti-national cooperation. For the Christian elites, the land was a symbol of their pioneer struggle and spirit, which had led them from being *minjung* in the early history of Christianity in Korea to becoming elites in “the Jerusalem in the East”, through the blessing of God and by their sweat and efforts. Kim Il-sung noted, “There were no ministers and elders who had no land, therefore, they complain about the practice of land reform.”²⁰⁷

It was almost impossible for the Christian elites to give up their land, which they finally had come to own after generations of effort through their puritan style of life. They were ready to do anything else, if they could keep their land. They cursed the Communists and lazy peasants because, unlike them, they had succeeded to escape poverty by their own efforts.

If we approach the issue of conflict between the Christians and the Communists from this context, we can understand why Protestant Christians in North Korea chose such a strong method of reaction, including the formation of Christian parties, the MFIM demonstration, terrorism and boycotting the general election. The Christians tried to protect their land through a political power struggle. Indeed, behind the conflict, the issue of land reform was a key factor.

4.4 United Front: The Religious Policy of Kim Il-sung

To analyze further the causes of the conflict between the Christians and the Communists, which decisively influenced the future of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, we also need to examine the religious policy of the North Korean Communist regime.

²⁰⁶ IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 395.

²⁰⁷ Kim Il-sung, *Selective Writings of General Kim Il-sung*, 134.

4.4.1 The Christian Background of Kim Il-sung

Kim Il-sung (1912-1994) was “the Great Leader” in North Korea for almost fifty years after the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was established in the northern region of the Korean peninsula.²⁰⁸ Even though his political title was prime minister, and later president, his power was much more than the western notion of such terms. Most people outside North Korea describe him as a dictator and some even describes him as a leader of a quasi-religion.²⁰⁹ However, two things are obvious: that he was one of great leaders in the anti-Japanese struggle and the North Korean people have respected him as a national father. His historical significance in North Korea is far-reaching, and beyond doubt.

Kim was born Kim Sung-ju on 15th April 1912, in Pyongyang, to a very poor peasant family. He was the eldest of three sons, and followed his family into Manchuria because his father was one of leaders of the independence movement there. He attended primary school there but later his father sent him to Changduk School in Pyongyang to be educated in the Korean context. When his father became ill, he then returned to Manchuria and attended grammar school and middle school there. However, he was expelled from the middle school for his leadership in the Communist youth league and imprisoned for six months. When he was released from jail, his parents were already dead, killed in the struggle for national independence. He then followed his parents’ spirit by organizing the anti-Japanese Communist guerilla movement.²¹⁰

Kim’s relation with his Christian family is very significant. For example, when he missed his Christian mother and remembered the memory of her religious life in 1989, his son, Kim Jong-il, the current state head of North Korea, and Communist leaders, immediately allowed the reopening of the Chilgol Church in her hometown.²¹¹ Therefore, the Christian background

²⁰⁸ Concerning Kim’s life, see, his autobiography, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, (With a Century: Autobiography), 8 vols. KWP Press. In addition to this, also see followings in English, Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, New York, Colombia University Press, 1988; Bong Baik, *Kim Il Sung: Biography*, vol. 1-3, New York, Guardian Books, 1970; C. Lee, “Kim Il Sung of North Korea”, *Asian Survey*, vol. 7, 1967, 374-382.

²⁰⁹ See, T. Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study of North Korea’s State Religion*, Bartlesville, Living Sacrifice Book Co., 1999.

²¹⁰ Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 3-5; Kim Il-sung, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 1, 345-361.

²¹¹ Dong-kun Hong, “Chilgol Church: The Second Church in Pyongyang”, in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Op. Cit.*, 415-419.

of Kim Il-sung is worth studying since it had an influence on the religious policy of the North Korean government.

Kim Il-sung was born in a Christian family in Pyongyang.²¹² Nevertheless, the first contact of one of his ancestors with Christianity had been unfortunate. When the warship *General Sherman*, with the first Protestant missionary to Korea, J. Thomas on board, attacked Pyongyang, his great grandfather Kim Ung-woo was a leader of the civilian army that resisted and eventually won the battle.²¹³ His father, Kim Hyung-jik (1894-1926) became a Christian when he was a schoolboy.²¹⁴ Kim Hyung-jik was educated at the Sungsil Christian Secondary School, which was the best school in the whole of Korea. According to Lak-joon Paik, the Sungsil School was founded to educate future Christian leaders. To study there, students were required to have recommendations from both a foreign missionary and a Korean pastor.²¹⁵ This suggests that Kim Hyung-jik must have been a sincere Christian.

In his autobiography, Kim Il-sung remembered two things importantly in relation to his father's Christian life. The first memory was that his father taught him, "If you want to believe in God, believe in the God of Korea, not the foreign God."²¹⁶ The second thing was that when his father was arrested for organizing *Chosun Kukminhoe*, or the Society for the Korean Nation (a secret organization promoting the independence movement) some Christian leaders held an early morning prayer for his release at the Myungshin Christian School, where his father taught.²¹⁷ However, his father died soon after his imprisonment, when Kim was still a primary school student.²¹⁸

²¹² See, Young-ho Choi, "Christian Background in the Early Life of Kim Il-sung", *Asian Survey*, October 1986; tr. Kyu-ho Lee, *The Journal of Korean Church History*, vol. 2, 1992, 69-78.

²¹³ "The Defeat of *General Sherman*", the archive of the Revolution Museum in Pyongyang. (There is no serial number); The Epitaph on the Monument of Defeat of the American Pirate Ship, *General Sherman*, Pyongyang. The author took pictures of these archives on 6 April 2001 in Pyongyang during his fieldwork in North Korea. Also, see, Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, (With A Century: Autobiography), vol. 1, 8; Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, 4-5.

²¹⁴ Concerning his life, see, *Kim Hyong-jik*, Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968.

²¹⁵ Lak-joon Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910*, 319.

²¹⁶ Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, (With A Century: Autobiography), vol. 1, 19.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29. The Kangs of Pyongyang are still well known as a family of Presbyterian leaders in Korea.

²¹⁸ Kim Il-sung's two uncles also died because of independence movement. See, Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 5.

Kim's mother, Kang Ban-suk (1892-1928) was born in a famous Presbyterian family in Pyongyang.²¹⁹ Her father, Elder Kang Don-uk was an important Christian leader, who established the Changduk Presbyterian Church and Changduk Christian School²²⁰ with the American missionary, Samuel Moffet.²²¹ Her name "Ban-suk" means "Peter, the Rock," taken from Matthew 16, 18. According to her friend Sung-rak Kim, "she was a highly religious laywoman leader."²²² Two years after her husband's death, she too passed away.²²³ Kim Il-sung had lost his Christian and nationalist parents in his early years.

Lastly, Kim Il-sung himself also had his own history of Christian life. He received a Christian education at the Changduk Christian School, which his grandfather-in-law had established. Rev. Yang-uk Kang was one of his teachers there.²²⁴ Remembering his childhood, Kim said, "I was surrounded by Christians."²²⁵ After he moved to Manchuria, he regularly attended worship services and served as a Sunday school teacher at the Kilim Presbyterian Church, until he became a Communist.²²⁶

Kim entered the Hwasung Euisuk, which was a Korean nationalist military boarding school following the recommendation of friends of his father's. However, he was disappointed with this place, because the nationalists were seriously divided against each other, and it seemed to him that they would never succeed in the independence struggle. When he started to frequent a Communist student circle in Kirin, he became convinced that Communism was the best way to liberate the colonized fatherland and the suffering people. Therefore, he moved to Yuwen Middle School in Kirin, taking a distance from the nationalists. Kim met a Communist teacher,

²¹⁹ Young-ho Choi, *Op. Cit.*, 265. Concerning her life, see also, *Mrs. Kang Ban-sok: Mother of the Great Leader of Korea*, Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968. N. B. Following the alteration of Romanization policy in North Korea in 1992, there is a difference here in the way her name has been spelled.

²²⁰ Young-ho Choi, *Ibid*, 266.

²²¹ PCK, The Reunification Committee ed., *Haebangjun Bukhankyohoe Chongram*, (Catalogue of the Protestant Churches in North Korea before the Liberation), Seoul, PCK, 1999, 102-103.

²²² Sung-rak L. Kim, "A Visit Home", *Monday Morning*, 30th November 1981.

²²³ Kim Il-sung's uncles-in-law, Kang Jin-suk and Kang Jin-kun also died for the independence of Korea, See, "Arrest the Member of Baeksan Guerilla", Japanese Police Notice, No. *Ko Kyung* 14520, 1 May 1921; *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 7th November 1957.

²²⁴ See, Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol.1, 88-89.

²²⁵ Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol. 5, 378.

²²⁶ *Kilim* is Korean pronunciation of *Kirin*. Concerning his Christian life, see, Y. Choi, *Op. Cit.*, 266-269; Kim Il-sung, "Rev. Jung-do Sohn", *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol. 2, 1-16.

Sangwol, and he studied the classics of Marx-Leninism, including *Das Kapital*, under his influences there.²²⁷

Nevertheless, even after he became a Communist, Kim had support from Korean Christian nationalists in Manchuria for his anti-Japanese guerilla struggle. He used to hide himself in churches to avoid the Japanese, and would borrow church buildings as suitable places educating the masses, and raising their consciousness.²²⁸

In brief, we can say that he was born and grew up in a family that was both Christian and nationalist.

4.4.2 Kim Il-sung's Understanding on Religion before the Korean War

Kim Il-sung's understanding of religion is noteworthy. When he argued with his guerilla comrades on the issue of accepting religious people into his army, he criticized the interpretation other Korean Communists were giving to Marx's statement about religion being the opium of the people, in the following way:

We must not interpret the Marx's definition of that 'religion is the opium of the people' radically or one-sidedly. The definition cautions an illusion of religion but does not means to oppress religious people. There are many patriotic religious leaders for example, the Christian and *Tonghak* nationalists. We should work together with these patriotic religious people in the way of national liberation.²²⁹

It is obvious that Kim's open understanding on religion before the Korean War was influenced by his own Christian background. He separated himself from the more extreme Communists whom he termed "leftist," on the issue of religion. He favored working with the Christians due to their support for his guerilla struggle in Manchuria.

Kim was influenced by his father's Christian nationalism. He also followed his father's instruction to "Believe in the God of Korea." When the issue of the Sunday election was

²²⁷ See, Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol.2, 199-235. D. Suh claims that it is doubtful that such literature in Chinese or Korean was available at this time in a remote town, Jilin (Kirin) in Manchuria. D. Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 8; However, Kim remembers that he borrowed the classics from Sangwol, and studied them, with his friends in a Communist circle, under the teacher's guidance. See, Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol.2, 222-235.

²²⁸ See, Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol. 5, 1994, 366-371.

²²⁹ Kim Il-sung, *Ibid.*, 349.

being debated, Kim criticized Christianity in Korea from a self-reliance perspective as follows:

Christians should cease a wrong attitude praising the foreign missionaries. It is not necessary to praise America as a model Christian nation and to appreciate sending missionaries. Christianity in Korea should be a patriotic religion of Korea for the benefit of Korean people.²³⁰

This suggests that Kim favored Christianity provided Korean Christians would be patriotic and nationalistic. He believed that the liberation of a suffering nation must be top of the agenda, even in religion.

However, he recognized that before the Korean War “the leftist sectarians oppressed the Christians in local areas without proper consultation with the Central Party.” He claimed that this had not been his intention.

If there were some Christians who were in trouble, they might be the Christian leaders who were involved in anti-revolutionary political behavior, but they were not suffering because of their religion. I fully support religious freedom... I believe that Communist revolution should be based on sincere love for people, not hating others. In that sense, I think religion is helpful for the revolution because religion teaches people to have love and charity for others.²³¹

Most historians in South Korea are skeptical about quotes like these. They think of them merely as rhetorical propaganda to the outside world.²³² Whether Kim’s claim represents his real intention or not, however, two things are clear: firstly, Kim had his own progressive interpretation of Marx’s definition of religion, and secondly, he highly emphasized cooperation with religion in the struggle for liberation and revolution.²³³ These two points were not the usual perspective among Communist leaders in the context of 1940s Korea. Kim even stated that “Christianity and *Tonghak* are most important religions” for the work of the United Front.²³⁴ These two were specially important because they had a sort of internal, religious orientation towards the liberation of the oppressed.

²³⁰ *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 27 June 1987.

²³¹ Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa Deobuleo*, vol. 5, 367.

²³² For representative works from this approach, see, Kyung-bae Min, *Kyohoe wa Minjok*, (Church and Nation), Seoul, CLS, 1981; Tae-woo Goh, *Bukhan eui Jonkyo Jungchaek*, (The Religious Polocy in North Korea), Seoul, Minjok Munhwasa, 1988.

²³³ J. Bonino interprets Marx as saying that the proletariat must not waste its forces in a useless and diversionary battle against religion. However, Kim had gone beyond such an interpretation to recognize the positive role of religion in revolution. J. M. Bonino, *Christians and Marxists: The Mutual Challenge to Revolution*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, 51.

²³⁴ Kim, Il-sung, *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 383.

It is this context, and within the strategy of forming and maintaining a United Front, that Kim introduced his religious policy.

4.4.3 United Front Tactics and Religious Policy

The united front tactics were suggested by the Third Communist International (Comintern) in 1921 for the application of the revolution in the Third World countries.²³⁵ The Communist party and the Comintern branches in each Third World country were asked to join in an alliance with the bourgeois revolutionary forces as a transitional stage toward the proletarian revolution. A united front has been present in Marxism whenever Communists have sought to enlist the support of non-Communists for the revolution. Such tactics were often employed in East Asia countries. They were crucial in Mao's Chinese revolution because there was a lack of industrial workers, the army of revolution, in China.²³⁶ Before 1949, the united front served as a strategy for defeating the Japanese in China.²³⁷

There were two streams of united front work in Korea during Japanese rule.²³⁸ One, as we indicated in Part One, was the *Shinganhoe*, a united organization, on movement for or the Korean Fatherland Restoration Association,²³⁹ which was organized by Kim Il-sung in the 1930s. The first of these resulted in failure because of inner conflict and Japanese suppression. The second did better. Dong-hyun Paik has evaluated that Kim's united front was successful

²³⁵ Concerning the development of United Front tactics, see, In-duk Kang, "A Study on the Communist United Front Strategy: The Strategic Case of the North Korean Worker's Party", PhD thesis, Kyunghee University, 1977; L. van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in the Chinese Communist History*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1967.

²³⁶ Concerning the Chinese united front, see, P. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front*, New York, Orbis Books, 1988, 45-74.

²³⁷ P. Wickeri, *Ibid.*, 45.

²³⁸ Concerning the history of the united front in Korea, see, Man-kil Kang et al., *Uri Minjok Haebang Undongsa*, (A History of the Liberation Movement in Korea), Seoul, Yoksa Bipyungsa, 2000; Concerning the history of Communism in Korea, see, R. Scalapino and C. Lee, *Communism in Korea*, 2 vols. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972; D. Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967; Chang-suk Kim and Joon-yup Kim, *Chosun Kongsan Chui Undongsa*, (History of the Korean Communist Movement), 5 vols. Seoul, Asia Munje Yonkuso, 1976.

²³⁹ Concerning the Korean Fatherland Restoration Association, see, Kim Il-sung, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 4, 1993, 441-470; Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 34-35.

in Manchuria, especially in linking Communists with *Tonghak* leaders and Christian nationalists.²⁴⁰

On account of this success in Manchuria, Kim believed that a united front would be the most appropriate tactic for the Korean revolution.²⁴¹ Before 1945, the idea of a united front served to unify all kinds of anti-Japanese forces under the banner of patriotism. From 1945-1950, promoting national construction and realizing people's democracy were the main issues treated under the notion of a "united front."²⁴² From 1950-1972, when the KWP sought to mobilize support and enthusiasm for socialist reconstruction, it again did so on the basis of the united front ideology. Since 1972, this same ideology has become a symbol for of the reunification of the fatherland, a "united front" being needed to make the Korean peninsula one entity again.

The period from 1945-1950 was crucial, Kim gave a new definition to the United Front in October 1945. "All *Chosun* (Korean) people should be united for an anti-imperial and anti-feudal democratic revolution," he said. For this revolution, "not only proletariats but also conscientious intelligentsias, religious leaders and nationalistic capitalists were invited to join the United Front".²⁴³ Kim organized the *Minjujuewi Minjok Tongil Junsun* (民主主義民族統一戰線) or Democratic National United Front (DNUF) on 22nd July 1946. He invited intellectuals, fair and just landlords, and businessmen and patriotic religious leaders to join into the DNUF for the task of national construction and people's democracy.²⁴⁴

However, in 1946, it becomes clear that the Christians and the Communists were not ready to work together. Indeed, both of them seriously confronted each other. When they had had a common enemy, the Japanese, it was easier to work together for a common goal, the liberation of the fatherland. Now, however, they put forward different ideologies, expectations and directions for reconstructing a new state in the Korean peninsula. Dong-kun Hong

²⁴⁰ See, Dong-hyun Paik, "The Development of Anti-Japanese Army Struggle in Manchuria and the Role of Korean Fatherland Restoration Association", in Man-kil Kang et al., *Op. Cit.*, 244-260.

²⁴¹ The Central Committee of the Korean United Front, *Minjok Daetongil Junsuneul Shilhyunhamun Kileseo*, (On the Way of Realizing Great National Unification), Pyongyang, Pyongyang Publishing Co., 1998, 6.

²⁴² See, Kim Il-sung, "Let Us Gather All Powers for Constructing a New Motherland", *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 14th October 1945.

²⁴³ Kim Il-sung, *On the Unity of Nation*, Chungjin, KWP committee in Chungjin, 1946, 19

²⁴⁴ The Central Committee of the Korean United Front, *Op. Cit.*, 8.

remembers that “in July 1946, there were anti-Communism revival prayer meetings in virtually every church, every night, in Pyongyang.” “It was impossible to accept Kim’s proposal for the FPJP because the Christians were angry after the land reform.”²⁴⁵

In these circumstances, a disappointed Kim Il-sung started to consider the necessity of creating “pro-Communist Christianity,” or pressing for “the renewal of Christianity in a Marxist land.” He needed to reconsider his optimistic approach expecting the Christian cooperation through the work of a united front.

On the other hand, there were Christian socialists who had a different response in the new situation.²⁴⁶ They favored Kim’s reforming program, and the clearance of the colonial legacy. They also believed that northern Protestantism should be renewed as a religion of the *minjung*. When these two needs came together, a new Christian organization emerged in North Korea, the North Korean Christian Association (NKCA).

5. The North Korean Christian Association: A Renewal from Above

5.1 The Changes of Organizational Name

Before we study the response of the NKCA, it is necessary to clarify the changes of name the Association went through. Historians generally use only the name *Chosun Kidokyo Ryunmaeng* (朝鮮基督教徒聯盟) or Korean Christian Federation, in describing the so-called “pro-Communist church” in North Korea. However, even though this organization can be traced throughout the relevant period, it has not always carried the same title.²⁴⁷

In his book, Yang-sun Kim states that “the *Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* emerged in November 1946.”²⁴⁸ It was A. Clark who translated the *Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* as the Christian

²⁴⁵ Hong was a theological student at the Pyongyang Seminary in 1946. Taken from the notes of interview with Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

²⁴⁶ Concerning the Christian socialists, see, Chapter II, Section 3.2.

²⁴⁷ The author found out about the alteration in the names during his fieldwork in North Korea in April 2001. For details, see the author’s article, “A Study of the Changes of KCF’s Organizational Name”, *The Kidokongbo*, 26th May 2001.

²⁴⁸ Yang-sun Kim, *Hankuk Kidokyo Haebang Shibnyun Sa*, (A Decade History of the Liberation of the Korean Church), 69.

League.²⁴⁹ After this, the *Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* or Christian league in people's mind as the name of an organization, which existed from 1946-1953, compromising Christians who were favorable to the government. Most historians assume that, after ceasing to exist in 1953, the *Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* was revived as the *Chosun Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* or Korean Christian Federation, in 1974.²⁵⁰ However, this organization had in fact existed and acted since 1946, albeit under a variety of names. These names were as follows:

- *Bukchosun Kidokyo Ryunhaphoe* or North Korean Christian Association, 1946-1958
- *Chosun Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* or Korean Christian Federation, 1958-1999
- *Chosun Chisdokyo Ryunmaeng* or Korean Christian Federation, 1999-Present

According to an official communication of the KCF, the inaugural name of the organization was not the *Kidokyodo Ryunmaeng* or Christian League, but the *Bukchosun Kidokyo Ryunhaphoe* (北朝鮮基督教聯合會), or North Korean Christian Association.²⁵¹ When operating under this name, both the denominational bodies and individual Christians had membership of the organization. However, after the Korean War, the membership of denominations did not have any meaning because all denominational assemblies had been abandoned, most of the leaders and members being fled to the South. Therefore, the organization had to adjust its structure, and changed its name at its general meeting in 1958.²⁵² The last alteration was in 1999, but the English title was not changed.²⁵³

The changes of name are of little or no important. However, the fact that the KCF has indeed had a continuous existence since 1946, no matter what different name it may have employed,

²⁴⁹ A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 243.

²⁵⁰ See, R. Rapp, *The KNCC and the KCF*, Seoul, The Korea Branch of Westminster Biblical Missions, 1988, 18-25; Kyung-bae Min, *Kyohoe wa Minjok*, (Church and Nation), 433-434; Tae-woo Goh, *Bukhan eui Jonkyo Jungchaek*, (The Religious Policy in North Korea), 165-166; In-soo Kim, *A History of Korean Christian Church*, 684-685; S. Masahiko, *A Study on the History of the Southern and Northern Churches*, 303-304; Kwang-soo Kim, *A History of Christianity in Northern Korea*, 328-329.

²⁵¹ During his fieldwork, the author had a chance to visit the United Front Monument, at Ssuksum Island in Taedong River. There was the name of the *Bukchosun Kidokyo Ryunhaphoe* among the member organization of the United Front. When he asked to KCF, Rev. Choon-ku Lee officially confirmed that the original name of the KCF was the *Bukchosun Kidokyo Ryunhaphoe*. The notes of Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, the lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Pyongyang Theological Seminary and Director for Mission of the KCF, 5th April 2001, Pyongyang.

²⁵² Choon-ku Lee, *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Choon-ku Lee, *Ibid.*

is highly significant for our study. Those who ignore the history of this organization between 1953 and 1974 are mistaken.²⁵⁴

5.2 The Activity of NKCA before the Korean War

5.2.1 The Establishment of the NKCA

There was a group of Protestant pastors who supported the Democratic Reformation Program of the Communist regime.²⁵⁵ The pastors often exchanged ideas on the reformation program.²⁵⁶ After the confrontation on the occasion of the MFIM ceremony, the group paid attention to Kim's proposal about the work of a united front. However, they were a small minority group in the FPJP. When the FPJP rejected the united front and announced their boycott of the election, this group considered organizing a separated Protestant Christian institution. As we already noted, they also made a statement in support of the general election.

When the Christian leaders rejected his proposal of forming a united front, Kim developed further ideas for setting up a new Christian organization in North Korea. Hence, after the election, he invited the leading pastors, and suggested they establish a patriotic Christian educational institution.²⁵⁷

With Kim's encouragement, the pastors therefore organized the NKCA on 28th November 1946. The NKCA was founded and promoted as an ecumenical organization among the Protestant churches in North Korea.²⁵⁸ However, Presbyterians, who were the majority among Protestants in North Korea, were in fact the main leadership of the NKCA. The inauguration of the NKCA seemed to be successful. The NKCA pastors invited the famous revival movement leader Very Rev. Ik-doo Kim to be the chairperson and Very Rev. Eung-soon Kim to be vice-chairperson, and they accepted. The central committee was filled with famous

²⁵⁴ The historians, who made this mistake, made uncritical use of South Korean governmental sources, not an adequate substitute for primary sources.

²⁵⁵ They were Yang-uk Kang, Duk-ho Kim, Byung-jik Kang, Chi-kun Kim, Kun-soo Park, Sung-cha Park, Sang-soon Park, Hee-ryum Cho, etc. See, IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 397.

²⁵⁶ See, *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 27th June 1987.

²⁵⁷ *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 27 June 1987.

²⁵⁸ Roman Catholic representatives were also invited, but they rejected invitation. See, IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 396-397.

pastors in North Korea.²⁵⁹

At the inauguration assembly, the NKCA approved the following general principles:

1. On the basis of Christian charity, we will advocate patriotism among people, and cooperate with the work of national construction for the complete independence of Korea.
2. We will struggle against evil and sin in order to construct a democratic Korea, and make efforts to develop "morality and justice."²⁶⁰
3. We will strive to secure the freedom of the Christian mission, and freedom of speech, the press, assembly and association.
4. We will strive for the development of Christianity in North Korea.²⁶¹

The NKCA stood clearly on the pro-Communist side. It intended to cooperate with the Communists in establishing the democratic reform program. On the other hand, the NKCA also tried to protect the churches and the Christians, seeking to develop a renewal of Christianity in North Korea. It presumed that even in a country dominated by Marxist-inspired government, such a renewal would be possible.

When A. L. Strong, a famous reporter on the Chinese Communist revolution, visited North Korea in 1947, she interviewed Rev. Yang-uk Kang, general secretary of the NKCA. Kang is reported to have justified both Christian opposition to the Japanese and Christian support for Kim over the election issue as follows:

Under Japanese colonial rule, religion and politics had to be separated. The church opposed the Japanese State. Some religious leaders believed that this paradigm should also be adopted over the issue of election. However, I believe that if the election had some good purpose aiming to approve urgent laws and to establish an independent nation, all citizens and organizations, including religious ones, had to participate in the election and need to cooperate with the government.²⁶²

This interview clearly shows that the NKCA distinguished between the Japanese state in Korea and the Korean Communist state. A different paradigm of church-state relations had

²⁵⁹ IKCH ed., *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁶⁰ The original text is "*Do-eui*", in Chinese "道義". The author cites the translation of "道義" in Editorial Division ed., *A Modern Chinese-English Dictionary*, 20th edition, Beijing, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1996, 175. N.B., in Korean usage, the "道義" also possible to have a religious meaning in relation to "*Tao* (道) or Way."

²⁶¹ The text taken from, *Chosun Joongang Nyungam*, (Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1949, 92. Archival No. 488, The Ministry of Reunification.

²⁶² A. Strong, "North Korea, Summer, 1947", in N. Kim et. al., *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History of the Liberation), vol. 5, Seoul, Hankilsa, 1989, 513. The author did not find the original English text, but has translated back from the account of it in Korean.

emerged in North Korea, quite different from the traditional paradigm based on opposition. A new cooperation paradigm between church and state was emerging, and being promoted by the NKCA.

5.2.2 NKCA vs FPJP

After the general election, the respective political positions of the NKCA and FPJP were in clear opposition to each other. When the North Korean People's Committee was inaugurated in February 1947 through the election, the number of NKCA leaders appointed to important posts of the Committee was noteworthy. For instance, Rev. Yang-uk Kang became secretary general of the SPA. The NKCA had become a politically powerful religious organization in North Korea.

By contrast, the FPJP was organizing the Christian Liberal Party. As they had done in 1946, the FPJP again held a MFIM memorial worship and anti-Communist demonstration on 1st March 1947. However, this time the participants were reduced to 1,000.²⁶³ After the failure of the Christian Liberal Party, the eighteen top party leaders, who were at the same time leaders of the FPJP, were arrested by the People's Committee.²⁶⁴ When they were released, they escaped to the South, and the FPJP faced a leadership crisis. This brought about a further weakening of the FPJP. The FPJP then boycotted the election of delegates for the SPA, on 25th August 1948. The People's Committee responded to this boycott by placing even stronger restrictions on the activities of the FPJP.²⁶⁵

There was not only a different approach to political issues but also ecclesiastical tension between the NKCA and the FPJP. This tension was evident at Pyungseo Presbytery meeting in October 1948, held at the Yochon Presbyterian Church. At the meeting, the Presbytery cancelled the membership of Rev. Yang-uk Kang and Rev. Sang-soon Park, on the basis of the FPJP's decision in relation to the general election in 1946. This had stated that "in the event that an acting church minister enters the field of politics, he must resign his office in the

²⁶³ Institute for North Korean Studies, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 1, 285.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 396-398.

²⁶⁵ See, "8.25 Choigo Inminhoieui Daeuiwon Seongeo Bulchansungja Chusabogo" (A Report of the Boycotted People on the Occasion of the Supreme People's Assembly Delegation Election, 25 August 1948), Ministry of Reunification Archival No. 254.

church.” Moreover, the Presbytery did not allow the entrance of pro-NKCA students to the Dukshin Bible College, which it managed.²⁶⁶

This decision was crucial in stimulating the NKCA to grasp the ecclesiastical hegemony within the Protestant church in North Korea. After the Presbytery meeting, the NKCA responded by allowing the membership of lay people, and started to organize local branches at province and county level. By the end of 1948, the membership of the NKCA had increased to 85,118.²⁶⁷ Chang-joo Kye reported that “most Protestant pastors entered the NKCA by April, 1949.”²⁶⁸

It is clear that during 1949 the Christians were seriously considering how they could survive under the Communist regime. Many may have moved from the FPJP to the NKCA for their own security. There were several cases of former FPJP pastors being compelled to join the NKCA.²⁶⁹ There is evidence of Communist authorities indirectly supporting the NKCA’s gaining hegemony over ecclesiastical power by discriminating against, or even persecuting the non-NKCA pastors. For example, non-NKCA pastors were often classified in the “reactionary” category,²⁷⁰ and some anti-Communist and anti-NKCA Protestant leaders disappeared.²⁷¹

When the NKCA took over ecclesiastical power from the FPJP, it introduced a radical restructuring of northern Protestantism. In December 1949, the NKCA officially dissolved the FPJP, and organized the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North Korea. The NKCA claimed that it was necessary to organize a separated Assembly because the southern

²⁶⁶ Institute for North Korean Studies, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 2, 409-411.

²⁶⁷ *The Yearbook of North Korea*, Pyongyang, KCNA, 1949, 92. Ministry of Unification Archival No. 488, microfilm.

²⁶⁸ Chang-joo Kye, “The Nature of the North Korean Christian League”, in Heung-soo Kim ed., *Op. Cit.*, 338-339.

²⁶⁹ Chang-joo Kye, *Ibid.*, 339-340.

²⁷⁰ A secret report by North Korean intelligence stated that non-NKCA pastors were carefully watched by the local authorities, and some of them classified as reactionary people. “Draft of Domestic Affairs Report: Activities of Reactionary Powers”, Ministry of Unification archival document no. 484.

²⁷¹ For example, Rev. Duck-young Bae, the principle of the Sunghwa Theological Seminary and Rev. Soon-chun Cho, the principle of the Dukshin Bible School disappeared after refusing to allow their school to be unified with a NKCA seminary. See, Man-chun Hong, “Christianity in Early Kim Il-sung regime and Rev. Yang-uk Kang”, *North Korea*, February, 1990; reprinted in H. Kim ed., *History of the North Korean Church after the Liberation*, 361-371.

Presbyterians had already done so.²⁷² At the same time, the NKCA absorbed the Pyongyang Theological Seminary directly under its authority. It was also absorbed the Sunghwa Methodist Theological Seminary and changed its name to the Christian Theological Seminary in March 1950.²⁷³ The NKCA seems to have been in virtually full control over the Protestant churches in North Korea prior to the Korean War (1950-1953).

5.2.3 NKCA, CDA and United Front

Within the united front in North Korea, there was also a South Korean Christian organization. Although most of the Christians in South Korea had supported the USAMGIK, some associated themselves with the NKCA. In order to see how this happened we must give an overview of events in the South. Most of the Protestant Christians in South Korea supported the USAMGIK because they greatly appreciated the USA, the country which had spread the Gospel to Korea. Furthermore, most of the Christian elite were USAMGIK members, and had been educated in the USA on the recommendation of the missionaries.²⁷⁴ In contrast to the Christians in the North, Southern Christians cooperated well with the new capitalist authority.

Nevertheless, there was also opposition. Land reform was also a burning issue in South Korea. The USAMGIK did not re-distribute land which had been confiscated by the Japanese Colonial Government. Moreover, the USAMGIK protected the land of pro-Japanese Korean landlords who had obtained huge estates by cooperating with the colonial power. Anger exploded when the USAMGIK refused to permit the establishment of labor unions. This led to the "October People's Struggle" in Taegu in 1946. Hundreds of thousands of people participated, and the US Army fired on the parade and many people died.²⁷⁵

In this context, in the South, a process of renewal similar to that initiated by the NKCA was introduced by Rev. Chang-joon Kim. Unlike the other Christian leaders, Kim stood near to those 'left-wing' people whose political motto was anti-USAMGIK. He justified his choice as follows:

²⁷² IKCH ed., *Op. Cit.*, 415.

²⁷³ S. Masahiko, *Op. Cit.*, 243.

²⁷⁴ For instance, 6 out of 11 Korean ministers in the USAMGIK were Christian reverends and elders.

²⁷⁵ See, Kyu-Hong Yun, "A Study of Political Theology and the Line of the Rev. Moon-Sik Choi", in Heung-Soo Kim ed., *Op. Cit.*, 1992, 242-246.

The Christian takes the righteousness of God as the criterion of all judgment. What we experienced in the "October People's Struggle" is that political peace without economic justice, such as *pax Romana*, is different to *pax Christi* which God gives to us.²⁷⁶

Kim organized a Christian leftist group, *Kidokyo Minju Dongmaeng* (基督教民主同盟) or Christian Democracy Alliance (CDA), on 24th February 1947. However, on that day, at the venue of the meeting of promoters, the 405 participants were terrorized by *Seobuk Chungnyun Dan*, a Christian youth organization that was essentially political and specifically anti-Communist. Most of its member had fled to the South from the North where they became strong supporters of the USAMGIK.²⁷⁷

Kim reinforced his criticism of the USAMGIK on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of the CDA, stating that "the USAMGIK which together with Syngman Rhee, is protecting pro-Japanese power and trying to establish a divided government, is an anti-democratic tyranny, and can be identified with the anti-Christ." He urged the CDA to "start a strong struggle against this tyranny because the original ethos of Christianity is not in protecting the few vested rights of a class, and justifying their oppression, but in justice and peace".²⁷⁸

The CDA, however, was unable to develop its renewal program because the organization was made illegal by the USAMGIK. In April 1948, Chang-Joon Kim was invited to the "Conference of Representatives of All Party and Social Organizations in Korea" at Pyongyang, to discuss reunification. However, he did not "return" to the South after the meeting.²⁷⁹

In North Korea, Kim took a lead in organizing the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland (DFRF), which was the organization that developed out of the former Democratic National United Front. He was elected as its secretary general in 1948.²⁸⁰ The

²⁷⁶ *Tokrip Shinbo*, (The Independence News) 30th January 1947

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 26th February 1947

²⁷⁸ KWP, "The Religious Situation in North Korea, 1949", *Chosun Jungang Yongam* (The Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1950, 312, Ministry of Unification, Archival No. 514.

²⁷⁹ Committee for Recording National History, *Bukhan Kwankye Saryojip*, (A Collection of North Korean Historiographies), vol. 6, Seoul, Committee for Recording National History, 1987, 111. To be precise, the word "return" is not the proper expression because his hometown and original parish were in the North.

²⁸⁰ N.B., Politically the DFRF was absorbed as a subordinate committee of the KWP. Later, however, it developed as a meeting point between the KCF and the KWP. Kim's appointment was recorded in KWP, "The Registration Report of Social and Political Organizations", September 1950.

NKCA in the North and the CDA in the South represented Protestant Christianity in the DFRF, the united front.²⁸¹ However, in reality, it was not possible for the CDA to join the united front fully because all the other members were in the South, and they were cut off from their leaders in the North.

5.3 A Renewal from Above

The NKCA had a new perspective on the Communist reform program. The leaders of the NKCA believed that this reform was moving in the correct direction for the *minjung*, and for national independence. Therefore, they accommodated themselves to the Marxist context, and supported Kim Il-sung. They also worried about the conflict that had arisen between the Christians and the Communists, and intended to protect the churches in North Korea by showing Christian patriotism. The NKCA developed a new paradigm of church-state relations based on cooperation. The NKCA sought a renewal of northern Protestantism within its Marxist context, not in opposition to it.

On the one hand, it can be said that the renewal program of the NKCA was at first highly successful, because vast numbers joined the Association and it took the hegemony of ecclesiastical power by 1949. On the other hand, however, we can say that the renewal of the NKCA soon failed, because during the Korean War the majority of North Korean Christians chose to move to South Korea.

There were several problems in the NKCA's renewal program, just as there had been in the FPJP's resistance program. Firstly, the renewal of the NKCA was a renewal "from above", not "from below." The NKCA leaders used a top-down method for their renewal, using their ecclesiastical power. Although the top-down method is easier and quicker than an approach that starts from the bottom, it makes it difficult for ordinary Christians to participate in a full, self-affirming way in the renewal program. It seems that the ordinary pastors and Christians who at first supported the NKCA's renewal simply interpreted it as a strategy for Christian survival. They therefore did not persevere with it, and eventually decided that flight to the South would be a more effective means to that end.

²⁸¹ In the Monument of the United Front, there were 56 constituency organizations. The NKCA and the CDA represented Protestant churches in Korea. The Epitaph of the United Front Monument, Ssuksum Island, Taedong River, Pyongyang, 2 May 1948.

Secondly, in spite of its ecumenical intention, the NKCA brought another division of the churches. On the issue of the reconstruction of the churches, the conservative Protestant Christians separated themselves, while the progressive Protestant Christians organized another Protestant Christian Assembly in the North.

Thirdly, there are similarities between the ways in which both the FPJP and the NKCA were politicized, although they each used a different paradigm of the church-state relationship. The NKCA identified with the Communist regime without any proper, constructive criticism of that regime. Therefore, there was a danger of becoming an “imperial religion,” blessing political power. The NKCA leaders seem not to have realized that Communism was also a secular power, which could also become corrupt and transform itself into an absolute power. Just as southern Christians gave uncritical support to the USAMGIK and its capitalist ideology, so the NKCA was equally uncritical in its approach to the Marxist state in the North.

Lastly, the renewal program of the NKCA proceeded without any clear theological basis. The NKCA leaders depended on ecclesiastical power to develop their renewal. However, it is only when a renewal program is backed up by a theology, that it can bring fundamental changes. Perhaps the leaders of the NKCA knew that the theological task would take a long time and, whereas they had to act quickly under the pressure of events. Whatever the reason for this failure, the consequence was that when the Anti-Religious Campaign started after the Korean War, the NKCA leaders had no theological weapons with which to defend the Christians against the Communist ideological attack.

Chapter IV

The Korean War and the Churches, 1950-1953

In this chapter, we will examine the way in which the Christian ideological struggle with Communism developed during the Korean War. It will be argued that in spite of the renewal of Protestant Christianity initiated by the NKCA after the liberation, the northern churches mainly kept their anti-Communist stance. They remained politically pro-South Korea, pro-capitalism, and pro-America. It will be shown that not only the Korean churches but also the WCC, due to its ideological preference, supported South Korea, the USA, and the UN during the war. The WCC at this time argued and preached anti-Communism. This was one of the main causes of the persecution of Christians in North Korea, because the Communists regarded Christianity as an anti-patriotic reactionary religion supporting their enemy. It will be also argued that the North Korean Christian support for the Allied Army, and the mass exodus of Northern Christians to the South that resulted therefrom, brought about the isolation of the churches in North Korea.

1. The Korean War

1.1 The Outbreak: Who Started the Korean War?

In 1948, two separate governments were established in the southern and northern parts of the Korean peninsula. From this point onwards, both of them campaigned for the reunification of the two Koreas. Both of them claimed political legitimacy for their government, and their ideology, to rule over the whole peninsula. In this process, they were also tempted to unify the nation by military force rather than by peaceful means. Finally, the worst national tragedy in five thousand years of Korean history, the Korean War, broke out in 1950.

The official South Korean position on the origin of the Korean War has been that “in the early morning of 25th June 1950, the North Koreans suddenly opened a general invasion all along the 38th Parallel against a sleepy, unprepared South.”²⁸² In the western world, it has also been

²⁸² Ki-baik Lee, *Hankuksa Shinron*, (A New History of Korea), 480.

accepted that the Soviets and North Koreans stealthily prepared an attack that was completely unprovoked.²⁸³

However, North Korea has asserted that South Korea started the war with the support of the US, while North Korea was making efforts to reunify the country by peaceful means:

Comrades! The puppet army of traitor Rhee Syngman has opened an unjust armed invasion against North Korea all along the 38th Parallel in this early morning...The Republic's government (North Korea) warned the enemy to cease the reckless armed attack so as to prevent a large-scale war, and also declared that if they do not stop this hazardous armed attack, they must have full responsibility of causing this war. However, the arrogant enemy is developing a full-scale war. The enemies have already invaded about 1 or 2 kilometers north of the Parallel.²⁸⁴

The USSR and China supported this account. However, South Korea and the US have continued to believe that Kim Il-sung simply told a lie to justify his attack.²⁸⁵

In the field of the Korean War studies, only recently, has documentary evidence been produced to demonstrate that the responsibility for making a "general invasion" across the parallel lies with the North. Myung-rim Park examined Russian secret documents on the Korean War, to which access has been allowed after the end of the Cold War, and came to this conclusion.²⁸⁶

However, B. Cumings claims that although North Korea opened a "general war", South Korea had first made a "local attack" in the Ongjin peninsula on 23rd June 1950, before the outbreak of the general war,²⁸⁷ and had occupied Haeju city in the North.²⁸⁸ According to him, this local attack suddenly spread eastward and developed into a general war on 25th June.²⁸⁹

²⁸³ Reference Division, Central Office of Information, *Korea*, London, November 1958, Quote No. R.3965, Classification 1.2d, 9. This report was based on the report of the UN Commission on Korea. However, B. Cumings criticizes the Commission's work, "UNCOK's report was drawn together on the morning of June 26, then finalized in Japan on June 29, based exclusively on American and South Korean sources and on the military observer's report, on which some preliminary work had been done on June 24 before hostilities commenced". B. Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 265.

²⁸⁴ Kim Il-sung, *Kim Il Sung Chujakjip*, (Works of Kim Il Sung), vol. 6, Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1979, 1.

²⁸⁵ D. Muccio, US ambassador in Korea made the first official report: "North Korean Forces invaded Republic of Korea territory at several points this morning", "From Muccio to State", 25th June 1950, taken from, www.geocities.com/Pentagon/1953/muccio.htm.

²⁸⁶ See, Myung-rim Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins*, vol. 1, Seoul, Nanam, 1996.

²⁸⁷ Ongjin is located at the west-end of the 38th Parallel.

²⁸⁸ In addition to Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract*, vol. 2, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 568-588; the following scholars also admit this local attack. See, I. F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1952; K.

As a matter of fact, however, this was not the first “local attack” on the North by the South. The first fighting lasted four days in May 1949, and took an official toll of 400 North Korean and 22 South Korean soldiers, as well as upwards of 100 civilian deaths in Kaesung, according to South Korean figures.²⁹⁰ Kim Il-sung reported that the “South Korean army made 432 armed attack across border” in 1949.²⁹¹ There is evidence that this border fighting was mostly caused by the South Korean attacks. The US ambassador in Korea, Muccio, reported that the border battles in 1949 began at Kaesung on 4th May, in an engagement that the South started,²⁹² trying to invade further northward.²⁹³

The war that came in June 1950 followed nine months of battles along the 38th Parallel in 1949. The border conflicts in 1949 caused the preparation of a civil war between the two Koreas. In the South, President Syman Rhee developed the policy of *Bukjin Tongil* (北進統一) or Reunification by Invasion of the North, based on the limited victories gained in border fighting in 1949. In the letter of 30th September 1949 from Rhee to his adviser R. Oliver, Rhee said:

I feel strongly that now is the most psychological moment when we should take an aggressive measure and join with our loyal Communist army (*sic*) in the North to clear up the rest of them in Pyongyang. We will drive some of Kim Il-sung’s men to the

Gupta, “How did Korean War Begin?”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 52, 1972, 699-716; D. W. Conde, *An Untold History of Modern Korea*, vol. 2, 1967, and tr. J. Choi, *Hankuk Chunjang: Ttohanaeui Sigak*, Seoul, Sakyejul, 1988; N.B., According to Myung-rim Park, “Because the CIA prohibited the publication of Conde’s book in the US, it was published in Japan in 1967 and translated in Korea in 1988”. Myung-rim Park, *Ibid*, 461. See also, J. Holliday and B. Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1988, 71-74.

²⁸⁹ Cumings takes evidence from the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald-Tribune* and the *Washington Post* on 26th June 1950, which reported that two South Korean companies of the Seventeenth Regiment had occupied Haeju in North Korea. B. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, 568-588. The UK military attaché in Tokyo cabled on 27th June a similar report, FO317, piece no. 84057, “Gascoigne to FO”, June 27, 1950.

²⁹⁰ North Koreans replied with counterattacks against South Korean occupation of several territories in North Korea. The worst fighting of 1949 occurred on 4th August when 6,000 North Korean border guard soldiers attacked South Korean army units occupying Unpa Mountain north of the border. *New York Times*, 5th August 1949. The North claimed that because the South Korean Paekkol unit had tried to occupy even further northward from the mountain, its self-defence action was inevitable. *The Nodong Shinmun*, 6th February 1950.

²⁹¹ DPRK National Security Department, “*Jungchi Bodo mit Damwha Jaryo*”, (Materials of Political Press Release and Statements), unpublished Paper, July 1950, 21.

²⁹² US National Archives, 895.00 file, box 7127, “Muccio to State”, 13th May 1949.

²⁹³ “The military urged (the) mounting (of) an immediate attack north towards Charwon (*sic*, Chulwon)”. US National Archives, 895.00 file, box 946, Muccio, “Memos of Conversation”, 13th and 16th August 1949.

mountain region and there we will gradually starve them out. Then our line of defense must be strengthened along the Tuman and Yalu River (i.e., the Sino-Korean border).²⁹⁴

This letter is crucial evidence that the South Korean army was not “entirely,” organized solely “for defense” purposes, as was claimed in the report of UN field observer, J. F. Dulles.²⁹⁵ On the contrary, Rhee wanted and tried to invade North Korea in the name of reunification. At the end of the August fighting, Muccio described the situation as follows:

There is increasing confidence in the Army. An aggressive, offensive spirit is emerging. Nerves that were frayed and jittery the past few months may now give way to this new spirit. A good portion of the Army is eager to get going. More and more people feel that the only way unification can be brought about is by moving North by force.²⁹⁶

South Korean attacks across the border in 1949, and the intention of war, made Kim Il-sung nervous because North Korean army forces were far smaller than those of South Korea.²⁹⁷ The situation changed fundamentally in early 1950. Due to the success of the Chinese Revolution, Korean soldiers who had fought in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army returned to North Korea in large number. Their return dramatically increased North Korean army strength to 95,000 by June 1950.²⁹⁸

Now, Kim Il-sung also started to consider liberating the South Korean people “suffering” under the “Pro-Japanese and Pro-American traitor Syngman Rhee” by military means. He pointed out that “because of American colonial policy, the former pro-Japanese landlords continued to monopolize the land, and the majority of people had been exploited by them

²⁹⁴ Oliver became the US ambassador in Korea during the Korean War. “From Syngman Rhee to Robert Oliver”, 30th September 1949, in R. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960*, Seoul, Panmun Books, 1979, 251. Warren Austin, the US representative to UN, at the UN Security Council in 1950, denied that this letter existed and claimed that Soviets fabricated it. However, Oliver validated the existence of the letter many years later. See, *Ibid.*, 252.

²⁹⁵ Dulles maintained that the South Korean Army was organized entirely for defense purposes. See, Reference Division, Central Office of Information, *Op. Cit.*, 9. J. F. Dulles will repeatedly appear in this chapter, especially in relation to the WCC Toronto Statement on the Korean War.

²⁹⁶ US National Archives, 895.00 file, box 946, “Muccio to Butterworth”, 27th August 1949.

²⁹⁷ Rhee rapidly expanded his army in 1949: army strength was at 81,000 in July and 100,000 by the end of August. R. K. Sawyer, *Military Advisers in Korea: KMAC in Peace and War*, Washington D.C., Office of the Chief Military History, 1962, 58. However, in the North, there were only two infantry divisions and one tank regiment until August 1949. Myung-rim Park, *Op. Cit.*, 341.

²⁹⁸ For details, see, Myung-rim Park, *Op. Cit.*, 341-351. North Korean army strength became “at least 100,000 more” than that of the South. The China-linked Korean soldiers were well trained and had abundant battle experience. B. Cummins, *Koreas Place in the Sun*, 247.

without land reform”.²⁹⁹ Based on this understanding, Kim planned the *Chokuk Habang Junjaeng* (祖國解放戰爭) or National Liberation War, which meant a military attack on the South.³⁰⁰ Stalin advised Kim to wait until a South Korean attack occurred and then counterattack. This would provide a justification for the war.³⁰¹ Mao promised Kim: “If the US army becomes involved in the war and invades North Korea across the parallel, China will send military forces to support you.”³⁰² He did not want to face the US army on the Chinese border, so Kim had the support and assurances he needed.

On the other side, Rhee also got a clear message from Washington that he would get American support when South Korea was attacked.³⁰³ Myung-rim Park maintains that South Korea and the US also prepared a counterattack scenario, similarly waiting for the North Koreans to launch the first attack. The scenario set out three stages in the case of a North Korean invasion: firstly, retreat; secondly, counterattack; finally, occupy the whole of North of Korea.³⁰⁴ The same logic was being followed in Seoul and Pyongyang, and also in Washington and Moscow, regarding the outbreak of the war.

By mid-1950, things were tense, with each side waiting for the other to start it. The two Koreas were ready to fight in the name of reunification. The US, the USSR and China all wanted a “limited war”, outside their own territory. Each hoped the war would be to their own “geopolitical benefit in East Asia,” imposing their own “ideological hegemony in the third world countries.”³⁰⁵

²⁹⁹ *Nagak Kongbo*, (The Bulletin of Cabinet), 1949, 216.

³⁰⁰ Furthermore, Park Hun-young, the leader of the Communist party in South Korea encouraged Kim by stating: “If the revolutionary army march to the South, more than 200,000 Communist guerillas will rise against Rhee and the US”. Myung-rim Park, *Op. Cit.*, 151.

³⁰¹ D. Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*, tr. H. Shukman, Rocklin, Prima, 1992, 158. Kim proposed to F. Shtykov, the Russian ambassador in North Korea, that he should discuss with Stalin the question of a “military attack to the South”. (Volkogonov, 370) Kim visited the USSR in April and China in May 1950 to get agreement and support from Stalin and Mao for the outbreak of war. (Myung-rim Park, 83-175).

³⁰² Myung-rim Park, *Op. Cit.*, 158.

³⁰³ M. P. Goodfellow, a US State Department official, indicated what he delivered to Rhee: “The U.S. Govt. position is this: avoid any initiative on S. Korea’s part in attacking N.K., but if N.K. should invade S.K. then S.K. should resist and march right into N.K...and Am(eric)an people would understand it”. Wellington Koo Papers, Colombia University, box 217, as quoted in B. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 254.

³⁰⁴ Park’s evidence is a top secret order of South Korean army, the Operation Order No. 38, 25th March 1950 and US army order, LD-SL-17. *Ibid.*, 586-587.

³⁰⁵ Heung-soo Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in Korean Churches*, Seoul, IKCH, 1999, 21.

From the above research on the origins of the Korean War, it seems that at the local level South Korea impatiently made the first attacks,³⁰⁶ and then waited for North Korea to open the general invasion.

1.2 The Process

Both Korea justified the Korean War as a national reunification war. The war concluded with an armistice on 27th July 1953, having lasted virtually for three years.³⁰⁷ For the first three months of the War, the North Korean Army had extraordinary success, pushing South Korean and American forces southward. The North Korean Army captured Seoul in three days, and within a month only Kyungnam province was left in the hands of South Korean forces. In spite of the intervention of American and UN allied forces, the retreat of South Korean and American forces continued until mid-September 1950. However, on 15th September 1950, the allied forces of South Korea, the US and the UN, commanded by General D. MacArthur, counterattacked the rear of the North Korean armies by landing at Inchon, a point about 100 miles below the 38th Parallel and on a line with Seoul. After the success of the Inchon operation, the allied army crossed into the North on 30th September and marched to the Yalu River. In November 1950, only a small part of Hambuk province was left in North Korean hands.

The UN's intervention in the Korean War was the first military action in her history.³⁰⁸ From the beginning of the War, the US had participated, as promised to Rhee. However, President Truman sent American air and naval power to Korea "without congressional approval". The lack of such approval meant that Truman could not call for general mobilization. Therefore, he brought the issue to the UN on 27th June, to cover the shortage of ground soldiers. Truman

³⁰⁶ Rhee failed at the second general election in May 1950. His party got only 56 seats but the opposition had 154. According to well-known historian Ki-baek Lee, most South Korean civilians understood this result as a vote of non-confidence in President Rhee. Therefore, he needed to take some strong action to change this atmosphere. Ki-baek Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 479. Possibly, Rhee ordered the local attack to entice Kim Il-sung's general invasion.

³⁰⁷ Concerning the history of the Korean War, see, A. Roy, *South to Naktong, North to Yalu*, Washington, D.C. Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961; J. Halliday and B. Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1988; ROK Department of National Defense, Committee of War History ed., *Hankuk Junjangsa*, (A History of the Korean War), vol.1-11, Seoul, Kukbangbu, 1967-1978.

³⁰⁸ Concerning the history of UN's intervention, see, W. Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995; Tae-ho Yoo, *The Korean War and The United Nations: A Legal and Diplomatic Historical Study*, Louvain, Louvain University Press, 1964.

called his intervention in Korea a “police action”³⁰⁹ so that he would not have to get a declaration of war.

The Security Council of the UN met on 27th June 1950. The US delegate submitted a draft resolution, which recommended that “the members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area”.³¹⁰ On the other hand, the Yugoslavia delegate presented a draft resolution, which suggested introducing mediation between the two Koreas and inviting a North Korean representative to the Council. This was to ensure that the North Korean view on the outbreak of the war would also be heard.³¹¹ The Yugoslav draft resolution received no support from the Western representatives.³¹² It was fortuitous for the USA that the USSR was deliberately absenting itself from the Security Council at this time in protest against the non-representation of Communist China in the UN. Had the USSR been present, it would certainly have vetoed the US resolution.

On 29th June, North Korea rejected the decisions of the Security Council as ‘unlawful’, principally on the grounds of the absence of the USSR, one of the permanent members of the Security Council.³¹³ In this attitude, North Korea was supported by the USSR and by all other “Soviet-orbit” states, which declared the Council’s decision unlawful and accused South Korea of aggression.³¹⁴ In spite of this declaration, the UN Secretary-General transmitted the Council’s resolution the same day to all member states and asked assistance for South Korea. Due to the resolution, in addition to the US army, 15 other nations sent their armies, including 12,000 British soldiers.³¹⁵ Thus, a civil war in Korea developed into an international war.

³⁰⁹ According to B. Cumings, this “police action” inaugurated the pattern for subsequent conflicts in Vietnam and Persian Gulf, in which wars were declared by executive decision rather than through proper constitutional procedure. B. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 265.

³¹⁰ UN Document S/VP 474, 5.

³¹¹ UN Document S/1509.

³¹² The US draft resolution was finally adopted by a vote of 7 against 1 (Yugoslavia) with 2 abstentions (Egypt and India). UN Document S/1511.

³¹³ The Soviet representative, Mr. Malik, had boycotted the meetings of the Security Council since 13th January 1950, on the issue of Chinese representation. On the legal aspect of the UN intervention in Korea, see, the UK White Paper, *Summary of Events Relating to Korea*, Cmd. 8078, Korea No. 1, 1950; See, also, Tae-ho Yoo, *Op. Cit.*, 23-49.

³¹⁴ Reference Division, Central Office of Information, *Op. Cit.*, 9.

³¹⁵ They were Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa and United Kingdom. For details, see, R. O’Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, 1950-1953, vol. 1: Strategy and Diplomacy*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1982, 462.

When the allied army eventually crossed into the North, it can be said that it was the beginning of a new war, because this action definitely went beyond that defensive “Police Action” which the UN had agreed. “J. F. Dulles was a key advocate of rollback”.³¹⁶ Dulles emphasized that it was “the first opportunity to displace part of the Soviet orbit”.³¹⁷ However, This “rollback” brought another international intervention in the war, with the Chinese becoming directly involved.³¹⁸ In mid-December 1950, the allied army had been driven back to the 38th Parallel. The battle line was eventually stabilized along the parallel in spring 1951.

On 10th July 1951, truce talks started. The negotiation dragged until after the US presidential election in the autumn of 1952. D. D. Eisenhower, who strongly criticized the unpopular war, won the election and rapidly developed an armistice,³¹⁹ which was concluded on the 27th July 1953.³²⁰ The battle line was accepted as a *de facto* new boundary between North and South Korea.³²¹

³¹⁶ B. Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 276. Dulles asked J. Allison to report in a top-secret memo to the National Security Council. Allison justified the rollback by saying that the parallel was agreed upon “only for the surrender of Japanese troops and that the US had made no commitments with regard to the continuing validity of the line for any other purpose” National Archives, 795.00 file box 4265, Allison, “The Origin and Significance of the 38th Parallel in Korea”, 13th July, 1950. However, there was a logical contradiction because if the parallel was not valid in 1950 and the US Army could freely cross it, how could the US condemn North Korea to the UN as an invader, when it crossed the parallel?

³¹⁷ US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United State, 1950*, vol. 7: Korea, Washington, D.C., 1976, 386-387.

³¹⁸ Concerning Chinese intervention, see, A. S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision To Enter the Korean War*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1968; R. E. Appleman, *Disaster in Korea: The Chinese Confront MacArthur*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1989.

³¹⁹ Concerning Eisenhower's Korean policy, see, H. W. Brands, “The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the ‘Other’ Geneva Conference of 1954”, *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 56, 1987, 59-85.

³²⁰ This armistice was signed between North Korea and US, not South Korea because Rhee had handed over the right of command of South Korean army to MacArthur during the war. The armistice has been the key issue of the peace talks between North and South Korea until now because North Korea insists that the peace agreement must be made with the US, not with the South. But, US does not accept this claim and does not return the right to South Korea yet. Rhee wrote to MacArthur, “I am happy to assign to you command authority over all land, sea and air forces of the Republic of Korea during the period of the continuation of present State of hostilities”. “From Rhee to MacArthur”, 15th July 1950.

³²¹ Concerning the truce talk, see, S. D. Bailey, *The Korean Armistice*, New York, St. Martin's, 1992.

1.3 The Results: Not a Dream, But a Nightmare

The dream of reunification resulted in a nightmare of killing. The Korean conflict brought about a tragic internecine war on the peninsula, which also intensified the international conflict. More tonnage in bombs was dropped on Korea than on the whole of Europe in the Second World War, reducing the entire peninsula to ashes. The Korean War resulted in 220,000 South Korean, over 600,000 North Korean, 1,000,000 Chinese, 140,000 American, and over 16,000 other UN military casualties.³²²

It should be also remembered that the Korean War killed millions of civilians. There were 1,000,000 South Korean and 3,000,000 North Korean estimated civilian casualties.³²³ About 100,000 civilians were listed as “killed or missing” in the South³²⁴ and 1,200,000 in the North.³²⁵ That means that, including soldiers, over one sixth of the whole Korean population, which was about thirty million in 1950, were killed during the war. In addition to this, ten million people became separated from their own closest family members, and have remained unable to meet each other from the end of this war until now.³²⁶ During the war, 43% of Korea’s industrial facilities were destroyed and 33% of its homes devastated.³²⁷

From the above statistics, two things stand out: first, that the number of civilian victims was enormous, and second, North Korean damage was much greater than that of the South. There were three reasons for this. Firstly, in the North, one of the major reasons for the vast number of civilian victims was the massive indiscriminate bombing carried out by the US air force. From the beginning of the war, the US was superior in air power.³²⁸ The B-29 planes dropped the recently introduced napalm bomb like “monsoon rain” in North Korea.³²⁹ For example, on

³²² *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Macropedia, vol. 10: Knowledge in Depth, London, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1978, 513.

³²³ *Ibid.* For more detail statistics, see, D. Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, New York, St. Martin’s, 1964, 460-461.

³²⁴ D. Rees calculates 117,000. *Ibid.*, 460.

³²⁵ *The Hankyoreh*, 25th June 2001, reported this figure quoting from Russian secret military documents of the Korean War.

³²⁶ Man-kil Kang, *Kocheo Ssun Hankuk Hyundaesa*, (The Revised Modern History of Korea), Seoul, Chanjak kwa Bipyungsa, 1994, 226.

³²⁷ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 10, 513.

³²⁸ The main US air force was jet planes. However, North Korea had a small number of propeller airplanes. R. F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1961.

³²⁹ See, J. Holliday and B. Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, 187-189.

29th August 1952, 1,403 sorties were flown; an official communiqué said that 10,000 liters of napalm were dropped ‘with excellent results’; 62,000 rounds of ammunition were employed in ‘strafing at low level’; 697 tons of bombs were dropped in seventy-eight North Korean cities and towns.³³⁰ North Korea reported 6,000 civilian deaths in Pyongyang from one raid alone.³³¹ G. Barrett of the *New York Times* described the civilian victims as follows:

The inhabitants throughout the village and in the field were caught and killed and kept the exact postures they held when the napalm struck—a man about to get on his bicycle, fifty boys and girls playing in an orphanage, a housewife strangely unmarked, holding in her hand a page torn a Sears-Roebuck catalogue crayoned at Mail Order No. 3,811,294 for \$2.98 “bewitching bed jacket-coral”.³³²

According to J. Halliday, “this indiscriminate bombing strained relations between the USA and its allies, especially Britain”. The British Foreign Secretary, A. Eden, was openly critical of the bombing of civilians.³³³ This bombing was even a motive for the defection of the British spy in North Korea, before and during the Korean War, G. Blake, who became a double agent, acting for the USSR. Blake himself attested to this years later in an interview:

Interviewer: Is there one incident that triggered your decision to effectively change sides?

George Blake: It was what I saw happening in North Korea. The relentless bombing of small Korean villages by enormous...American flying fortresses. People, women and children, and old people, because the young men were in the army. I saw from my eyes, and we might have been victims ourselves. It made me feel ashamed. Made me feel ashamed of belonging to these overpowering, technical superior countries fighting against what seemed to me quite defenseless people.³³⁴

However, the US army did not listen to Eden’s advice and the policy of “torching” villages continued. In addition to human casualties, 600,000 houses, 5,000 schools, 1,000 hospitals and surgeries and 8,700 factories were destroyed by bombing from 1950-1951 in the North.³³⁵

There were also considerable numbers of civilian massacres during the War, carried out by the US ground army. The famous painter, Pablo Picasso, drew a picture entitled *Massacre en*

³³⁰ J. Holliday and B. Cumings, *Ibid.*, 189.

³³¹ A total of 420,000 bombs were dropped on Pyongyang during the war, which had a population of 400,000 before the war. J. Holliday and B. Cumings, *Ibid.*, 188; For another example, “on November 8, 1950, seventy B-29’s dropped 550 tons of incendiary bombs on Sineuijoo, ‘removing it from the map’; a week later Hoeryung was hit with napalm ‘to burn out the place’”. B. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol.2, 753.

³³² Quoted from, B. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 295.

³³³ J. Holliday and B. Cumings, *Op. Cit.*, 188.

³³⁴ “Red Files: Secret Victories of the KGB-George Blake Interview”, PBS, downloaded from www.pbs.org/redfiles/kgb/deep/interv/k_int_george_blake.htm

³³⁵ *Kyungje Kunsul*, (The Economic Reconstruction), September 1956, 5-6.

Coree in 1951. He portrayed the US army killing Korean civilians, mostly pregnant women and children. Recently, two Associated Press (AP) correspondents proved that Picasso was correct. The AP writers report that about 400 civilians, who were largely elderly people, children, infants and women, were killed by the US army at Nogunri on 28th July 1950.³³⁶ This was not the only massacre of civilians by US troops. For example, 35,383 civilians were killed by US army in Sinchon, North Korea.³³⁷ B. Cumings lists a serious of mass killing by US troops and recognizes that the majority of civilian casualties during the war came about as a result of American operational mistakes.³³⁸ An American soldier said:

"But, hell, they've all got on those white pajama things (Korean traditional dress) and they're straggling down the road"... "Women? I wouldn't know. The women wear pants, too, don't they?" "They're troops. Shoot'em".³³⁹

American thought anyone in "white pajamas" might potentially be an enemy. "From this point on, American forces began burning villages suspected of harboring guerillas".³⁴⁰ According to a sensitive British war correspondent, American troops usually began their hunting operations with burning and firing villages in enemy area. "There were few who dared to write the truth of things as they saw them".³⁴¹

There were also civilians who actively supported one side or the other, and for that reason were killed either by the North or the South Korean armies. The number of those deliberately executed in this way was much smaller than those killed by the indiscriminate military operations of the US forces. At first, North Korea strongly prohibited killing civilians because receiving local support from ordinary people, particularly from farmers and peasants, was one of most important tactics of their revolutionary war. However, a number of brutal atrocities were perpetrated against civilians as they retreated, when their occupation of the South ended.

³³⁶ See, S. Choe, C. J. Hanley and M. Mendoza, "Bridge at No Gun Ri", 30th September 1999, AP Press. These three reporters won the Pulitzer Prize in 1999. The full text can be downloaded from the AP Press website, www.wire.ap.org/Appackages/nogunri/story.html. They found 120 names of victims. Among the 120, 70 were women and most of the men were over fifty. There were also 25 children and infants under five. See, "Bridge of Nogunri – Victims", www.wire.ap.org/Appackages/nogunri/victims.html. This massacre was ordered by an American commander. Ser No-80-Fm:8A: Controlled Movement of All Refugees.261000K Jul 50; www.wire.ap.org/Appackages/nogunri/orders_8tharmy.html. However, Major General H. R. Gay told a lie that North Korean troops killed the civilians at Nogunri at that time. S. Choe et al., *Op. Cit.*, 8.

³³⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 4th December 1950.

³³⁸ B. Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 269.

³³⁹ E. Larrabee, "Korea: The Military Lesson", *Harper's*, November 1950, 51-57.

³⁴⁰ B. Cumings, *Op. Cit.*, 269.

³⁴¹ R. Thompson, *Cry Korea*, London, MacDonald, 1951, 39; 42.

The North Korean army killed thousands of political prisoners, families of the South Korean police and of the Pro-Rhee people, including some Christians. They did so despite the high North Korean officials continuously warning against executing people.³⁴² General Mu Jung, the commander of the Second Corps, was purged by Kim Il-sung because “he executed people without proper legal process like the brutal act of a feudal monarch”.³⁴³

The South Korean police were also involved in a mass killing of political prisoners and families of Communist guerillas. For example, from 2nd-6th July 1950, South Korean police executed 7,000 people at Yangwol with the supervision of American military advisors.³⁴⁴ These people were either imprisoned guerillas or their relations. Other civilian killings by the armies of the South occurred in North Korea during the South Korean occupation of the North.³⁴⁵ The Korean peninsula was indeed a “killing field” during the war, especially in the North.

2. The Korean War and the Churches

Byung-uk Chang criticizes Korean theologians: “I am shocked that there is not a single ‘confession of faith’ or theological reflections on the Korean War. I expected there would be some critical statement of the Christian position on the war”.³⁴⁶ This could be something of an overstatement. However, it is true that we can hardly find any theological works on the issue.

Although some outstanding research has been published since Chang’s criticism,³⁴⁷ it is still difficult to find studies of Protestant Christianity in North Korea during the Korean War.

³⁴² “Do not execute the reactionaries for (their) wanton vengeance. Let legal authorities carry out the purge plan”. “Handwritten Minutes of a Korean Worker’s Party Meeting”, 7th December, 1950, MacArthur Archives, RG6, box 80, ATIS issue no. 29, 17th March 1951.

³⁴³ Mu Jung was purged on 21st December 1950 at the third Central Committee Meeting of the KWP. Kim Il-sung, *Kim Il-sung sunjip*, (Selective Works of Kim Il-sung), vol. 3, Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1953, 140.

³⁴⁴ See, B. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, 669.

³⁴⁵ “I know of course that there is a real difference between unprovoked aggression and the kind of atrocities of which the South Korean army is guilty”. “From Visser’t Hooft to Nolde”, 6th November 1950.

³⁴⁶ Byung-uk Jang, *6.25 Gongsan Namchim kwa Kyohoe*, (The Korean War and Church), 1.

³⁴⁷ See, Chi-joon Noh, “Influences of the Korean War on Korean Religion”, Korea Society of Sociology ed., *Hankuk Junjaeng kwa Sahoe Byundong*, (The Korean War and Social Changes), Seoul, Pulbit, 1992, 223-259; In-chul Kang, “The Role of Religion in the Development of Anti-Communism during the Korean War”, *Ibid.*, 182-222; Jung-min Suh, “The Korean War and Christianity”, in Soo-il Choi ed., *Hinyun Shinhak kwa Tongil Hinyub Undong*, (Jubilee Theology

Therefore, in this sub-chapter, we will examine Christian approaches to the war, and its impact to northern Protestantism.

2.1 The War and the Northern Churches

2.1.1 Cooperation: The Response of NKCA

During the Korean War, Protestant Christians in North Korea became sharply divided due to the ideological confrontation. As the war developed, they were forced to choose one of the two systems, or ideologies, for survival. Under the Communists, northern churches were at first forced to demonstrate their patriotism. Later, when the Allied army entered the North, they needed to prove that their cooperation with the Communists was not their real intention. In this situation, two extreme positions on the war developed as the Protestant Christians in the North divided into pro-NKCA and anti-NKCA groups, the latter being former FPJP members.

From the beginning, the NKCA was highly supportive of the “national liberation war against American colonists”. The NKCA organized a series of Christian rallies expressing Christian support for the war, with prayers for the victory of the North Korean army. For instance, on 30th June 1950, the “Wonsan Christian Indignation Meeting” expressing anger against the USA was held at the Wonsan First Presbyterian Church. It adopted a statement that called for “Christian support for victory in the just war”.³⁴⁸ The Christian Pastors Indignation Meeting in Pyongyang was held “ecumenically” on 15th August. The meeting, in which most of the leaders of all the Protestant denominations participated, announced an appeal saying:

Dearly beloved brethren, all Christians and pastors in North Korea!
We sincerely appeal to brothers to defend divine doctrine and justice, and to protect peace, freedom, reunification and the independence of the fatherland as follows:
- Let all churches hold worship to God for the complete victory of our wise and brave people's army in the just and holy war for driving out the American imperialists.
- Let us pray for the prosperity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which secures religious freedom for Christians and a fully, happy and peaceful life for us.

and Jubilee Runification Movement), Chonan, Institute for Korean Theology, 1995, 396-419; Joong-hyun Choi, “The Korean War and Messianic Groups: Two Cases in Contrast”, PhD Thesis, Syracuse University, 1993; Heung-soo Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches*, Seoul, IKCH, 1999.

³⁴⁸ *The Nodong Shinmoon*, 15th August 1950.

- Let us pray for the just judgment of God upon Rhee Syngman and his followers, who are the murderers and invaders in this civil war.
 - Let us pray for the just judgment of God upon the American imperialists, who indiscriminately bomb our cities, villages and even our holy sanctuaries.
- This war is a just and holy war to secure the reunification, independence, freedom and peace of the fatherland against the invaders.³⁴⁹

Here, the war is justified as a just and holy war. Although the NKCA believed that the South opened the general invasion, it was a high-sounding political appeal, which adopted the Communist slogans uncritically, ignoring the fact that the North also had responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities. Their declaration of holy war was certainly an over-justification of the war. The statement was an uncritical endorsement of the Communist political line rather than a serious theological reflection.

The NKCA went on further to support the Communists, suggesting a “Prayer Day for Eradicating the Invader American Imperialists and Traitor Syngman Rhee’s Conspirators” on 13th August. The official organ of the KWP reported: “All over the country, a worship for victory was held in churches expressing a truly patriotic heart”.³⁵⁰ Furthermore, some of the NKCA leaders gave donations for providing weapons for the army, and encouraged laypeople to participate in the donations.³⁵¹ For instance, Rt. Rev. Ik-doo Kim, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church and Chairperson of the NKCA, donated 100,000 Won for this purpose.³⁵²

This cooperation was a sign of the fact that the NKCA leaders’ understanding of the war was similar to that of the Communists. The NKCA had been born out of a criticism of pro-Japanese and petit-bourgeois Protestantism in North Korea. It had supported the establishment of the Communist state and its policies, such as land reform. Therefore, the NKCA’s cooperation with the Communists was not something new. However, this is not enough to explain why the NKCA, a Christian association, eagerly supported the war. Here is a quotation, which shows their understanding of the war:

The invasion of our fatherland and the satanic barbarous acts of American imperialists have provoked the anger of all people in North Korea. It has completely

³⁴⁹ “Appeal to All Patriotic Christians and the Religious”, 5th August 1950, The Christian Pastors Indignation Meeting in Pyongyang. This appeal was signed by thirty-six denominational leaders including Rev. Yang-uk Kang (Chairperson of the Central Committee, NKCA), Rt. Rev. Ik-doo Kim (Moderator, Presbyterian Church), Rev. Jin-koo Lee (Vice-Chairperson, Methodist Church).

³⁵⁰ *The Nodong Shinmoon*, 15th August 1950.

³⁵¹ See, “Appeal to All Patriotic Christians and the Religious”, 5th August 1950.

³⁵² *The Nodong Shinmoon*, 7th August 1950.

removed any remnant of Christian respect for the Americans, who introduced the Gospel to Korea. Koreans had never hurt the Americans before. However, now American imperialists have sent their troops to the fatherland, and the troops are destroying our peaceful cities and villages. They have even massively killed unarmed women, infants and elderly people. The air force of, a so-called Christian country, America, bombs cities on Sunday, the Sabbath. They killed Christians who were at worship by bombing churches. We cannot forgive them. We, Christians, must rise for the reunification and independence of the fatherland based on our patriotism, in response to the appeal of our great leader, Kim Il-sung.³⁵³

The NKCA leaders clearly did not think of the war as a civil war. They regarded it as a just war to preserve the independence of Korea against American colonialism. Based on this understanding, it was possible for them to support the war as an expression of Christian patriotism.

However, their stance emphasized a one-side interpretation of the Korean War. Even though the war had some characteristics of a “proxy war” by superpowers, it was certainly provoked by Koreans themselves as a civil war. When we think about this characteristic, it was necessary for the NKCA to emphasize peace and reconciliation as a Christian church before justifying the war. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find any such efforts on the part of NKCA.

The NKCA had originally intended the renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea in the Communist context. However, renewal should not have meant uncritical assimilation of Communist policy. Although Rhee certainly did cooperate with pro-Japanese and US troops to kill many civilians, the NKCA should have considered its justification of the war more carefully because secular powers often use religious authority for their political purposes. As a result, the NKCA failed to receive widespread support within Protestant Christianity in North Korea. Consequently, the majority of northern Christians welcomed and supported the Allied army when they rolled back the northern advance.

The NKCA’s support for the war was an emotional approach, based on ideological sympathy and diplomatic self-interest, rather than theological reasoning. The NKCA’s cooperation with the Communists during the war was therefore carried on without support from below, continuing the inadequate leadership style that had already prevailed in the attempted renewal

³⁵³ “The Speech of Rev. Sung-hoon Kwon”, in *Ibid.*

during the pre-war period. Even some of the NKCA leaders who had themselves signed the appeal, chose to move to the South, or remain there, when the situation changed.³⁵⁴

2.1.2 “Exodus”: The Response of Majority

From the beginning of the war, according to Eun-kyun Hwang, the majority of Christians in North Korea, who had maintained their anti-Communist position, waited for the coming of “the angel of salvation, the US army”.³⁵⁵ The Allied army finally did roll back occupy most of the North Korean region in October 1950. When the Allied army entered Pyongyang, Christians in North Korea seemed “to re-experience the rejoicing of the liberation from the Japanese”.³⁵⁶ On 29th October, the Welcoming Service For the Allied Army was held at the Seomoonbak Church, gathering 3,000 Christians.³⁵⁷ This was the same church in which, earlier on, a victory service for the North Korean army had been held. The difference this time was that it was now the US army that was being welcomed as a “salvation army”.³⁵⁸

Hweui Sunwoo, a former South Korean intelligence officer in Pyongyang, described the atmosphere as follows:

The Christians in Pyongyang, who recovered freedom of faith, thanked God for giving them the second liberation by sending the Allied army. They organized a Great Revival Prayer Meeting to glorify the name of God on this occasion.³⁵⁹

It was indeed a moment of great joy for those Christians who had suffered under the Communists. However, there was not the same feeling among the majority of non-Christian civilians, most of whom were peasants. Young-sup Kang, chairperson of the KCF, says:

The vast majority of North Koreans hated the US army because many of them had lost their family members by the indiscriminate bombing of the US air force. However, Christians praised the US troops like a crusade of divinely liberating soldiers. It was shameful for me to say, “I am a Christian”.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁴ See, Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 247.

³⁵⁵ Eun-kyun Hwang, “Liberation and Churches in Pyongyang”, *Christian World*, vol. 1, 1957; reprinted in Heung-soo Kim ed., *A History of North Korean Church since 1945*, 328-331.

³⁵⁶ Dae-sun Park, “My Experience of the Korean War”, *The Christian Newspaper*, 21st June 1969.

³⁵⁷ H. A. Rhodes and A. Campbell, *History of the Korean Mission, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1935-1959*, New York, Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1965, 100.

³⁵⁸ H. E. Fey, “A Great Church in Seoul”, *The Christian Century*, 30th January 1951, 1058.

³⁵⁹ Hweui Sunwoo, *Nodaji*, (A Bonanza), vol.3, Seoul, Dongseo Munhwasa, 1986, 176.

³⁶⁰ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

Furthermore, one thousand workers from the Christian Placation Unit came with the Allied Army up to North Korea for propaganda activity aimed at pro-Communist working class people. This unit was organized by the Korean Christian National Relief Association, cooperating with the Department of Defense.³⁶¹ This group of workers was led by anti-Communist pastors who had fled to the South in order to avoid persecution before the war, having failed to gain power through setting up Christian political parties. These pastors included Eun-kyun Hwang, Kyung-jik Han, Hang-rok Cho and Won-ryong Kang and others.³⁶² Most of the group were also members of *Seobuk Chunnyun Dan*, or North West Youth League, an extreme right wing Christian anti-Communist organization. Soon afterwards, the Christian Placation Unit developed into *Chiandae* or the Civilian Security Guard in North Korea. Most of these voluntary guards were sons of former Christian landlords in North Korea, and were very hostile towards the Communists, and especially towards those peasants who had occupied their land. There is no doubt that “many Christian young people in the guard were involved in investigating and executing the Communists.”³⁶³

This pro-South and pro-American attitudes of many northern Christians also brought persecution as the North Korean army retreated.³⁶⁴ During the retreat, the Communist troops executed a number of Protestant leaders. Young-bihn Lee says, “At that time the Communists considered Christians as pro-American, and even as US intelligence agents”.³⁶⁵ According to Kwang-soo Kim, 156 Protestant leaders were “martyred”, most of them in October 1950.³⁶⁶ Although the executions were not the intention of Kim Il-sung, they had a crucial effect in increasing Christian hostility towards the Communists.

³⁶¹ A. D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 247-249.

³⁶² See, Heung-soo Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches*, 60-63; Rhodes and Campbell, *Op. Cit.*, 100-103; Yong-bock Kim, *Hankuk Sahoe wa Kidokyo*, (Korean Society and Christianity), Seoul, Hankuk Kidokyo Munhwa Yonkuso, 1984, 281-282.

³⁶³ IKCH ed., *Bukhan Kyohoe Sa*, (A History of the North Korean Church), 422. O. F. Nolde, the director of the CCIA asked George Paik, a church leader in South Korea, “Is there apparent a clear-cut policy to conserve the benefits of land reforms which were effected in North Korea?”, “From O. F. Nolde to G. Paik”, 27th November 1950.

³⁶⁴ As we noted, these executions mostly took place in September and October during the retreat of the Second Corps of the North Korean Army, commanded by General Mu Jung.

³⁶⁵ Young-bihn Lee and Soon-hwan Kim, *Tongil kwa Kidokyo*, (Reunification and Christianity), Seoul, Konan Hamkke, 1994, 107.

³⁶⁶ See, Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 235-266. According to his statistics, 123 were Presbyterian, 25 Methodist and 8 Holiness Church leaders.

Consequently, when Chinese troops intervened and the Allied army retreated again, a large number of northern Christians, particularly the leaders, were in difficulty. They would not stay any longer in the North because they feared the reaction of the Communists. Heung-soo Kim illustrates:

When the prayer meeting for the Allied army was continuing, Chinese troops started to roll back the Allies. It was inevitable for the pastors in North Korea to flee towards the south because the Allied army was defeated by the Chinese troops. It proved that the placation work was impatient, and failed due to the changes of war situation. Most Christians could not stay any longer in North Korea because they welcomed and supported the enemy of North Korea, the Allied army.³⁶⁷

In the end, a majority of the northern Christians fled to the South with the support of the US troops.³⁶⁸ It is difficult to estimate how many Protestant Christians fled to the South. Before the Korean War, there were about 2,000 churches, 200,000 Christians, 410 pastors, 498 evangelists and 2,142 elders in Protestant Christianity in North Korea.³⁶⁹ According to the statistics of Ki-Jun Koh, after the war only about 20 ordained pastors and 50,000 Christians were left.³⁷⁰

The Christians who fled call this event an “exodus”, under the guidance of God.³⁷¹ Whether it was indeed an “exodus” or merely an evacuation, Dong-kun Hong criticizes what happened, claiming that “the evacuation of the pastors is an ethical issue, because they left behind a quarter of their congregations in the North”.³⁷² Byung-uk Chang also criticizes the silence of theologians on this point. He wonders how the shepherds could evacuate to the South while leaving their sheep in the North.³⁷³ On the other hand, the NKCA leaders also failed to

³⁶⁷ Heung-soo Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches*, 62.

³⁶⁸ In Pyongyang, special trains for Christians were organized by the Allied army. In Hamhung, Concerning 40,000 Christians fled to the South on US warships. See, Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 264-266.

³⁶⁹ KWP, *Chosun Junang Nyungam*, (Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1949, 13, Ministry of Reunification Archival no. 488. C.f., Ki-jun Koh, the former general secretary of the KCF reported that there were 1,473 Protestant churches and 117,000 Christians in North Korea before the war. These statistics could be those of NKCA member churches. See, Ki-jun Koh, “Socialism and Christianity”, manuscript, Dialogue on the *Juche* Idea and the Reunification of the Fatherland among the Christians in the North and in Overseas and the North Korean Scholars, 3rd November 1981, Vienna, Austria, 4. N.B., The author follows the North Korean governmental statistics in this thesis.

³⁷⁰ E. Weingartner, “Confidential Report: CCIA/WCC Delegation to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, 9-16 November 1987.”

³⁷¹ Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 266.

³⁷² Dong-kun Hong, *Miwan eui Kuihyang Ilki*, (The Uncompleted Diary of Homecoming), 234.

³⁷³ C.f. When East and West Germany divided, most pastors in Communist East Germany remained

cultivate Christianity in the Communist context, because only about 20 core leaders of NKCA chose to stay the North.

2.1.3 The Remnants

Most northern Christians evacuated to the south in January 1951, when the Allied army retreated. The battle line stabilized in Spring, and the truce talks began in July 1951. With the beginning of the talks, the war came to a state of lull. From this point onwards, it was almost impossible for the Christians to evacuate to the South.

In contrast to the flight of the majority of the pastors from North Korea, it is useful to cite two outstanding stories of those who kept their ministry in the North. A female evangelist in Pyongyang, Soon-hyo Kim, said, “All the people are going down to the South, but I will go up to my home church to die for my sheep”. She was invited to the Second Shineuijoo Presbyterian Church, whose senior male pastor had fled even before the war. She was killed in the Spring of 1951, because she refused to cooperate with the Communists.³⁷⁴ Kwang-soo Kim remembers several extraordinary stories of pastors who did not evacuate to the South, in order to continue their ministry in the North, and were finally executed by the Communists.³⁷⁵

Hence, in addition to the diplomatic and emotional approach of the NKCA, and in contrast to that approach, there was also an evangelistic approach among of the Christian remnants in North Korea. These pastors had the same understanding of Communism as Christians who evacuated, but they chose to be in the North due to their strong evangelistic zeal. However, most these remnants were executed because they refused to support the Communists during the war.³⁷⁶

Our second example is Pung-woon Lee, a Methodist pastor in a rural village, who realized that the church should serve the poor, and thus become an authentic church in the Communist context. Based on this understanding, he devoted himself to building up a local collective

for their congregations, See, K. Barth and J. Hamel, *How to Serve God in a Marxist Land*, New York, Association Press, 1959; G. Baum, *The Church for Others: Protestant Theology in Communist East Germany*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1996, 25-44.

³⁷⁴ Kwang-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 249.

³⁷⁵ See, Kwang-soo Kim, *Ibid.*, 248-259.

³⁷⁶ See, Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 90.

farming community for the poor peasants. When he died in 1960, the Communists in his region built a monument in remembrance of his contribution for the peasants.³⁷⁷

Unfortunately, except for the monument, there is no record of his work. However, in him we can find a new paradigm for a Christian approach to the Communist context. His was a *minjung*-centered approach, in contrast to the evangelistic approach of conservative pastors and the diplomatic approach of the NKCA. However, it is difficult to find other cases of the *minjung*-centered approach in this period. This indicates that this approach was not popular within the NKCA.

For the majority of the Christian remnants in the Communist “Babylon”, North Korea, a long and suffering pilgrimage awaited for them. During the Korean War, 408 clergy members, including evangelists, were executed by the Communists, and 1,373 churches burned down.³⁷⁸ The 50,000 remaining Christians had to face the Communist reaction and social hostility, without pastors, and without spiritual shelters, or sanctuaries. Moreover, many of them were women. According to Dong-kun Hong, in many cases, only fathers and sons evacuated to the South “to preserve their family name”, while women (wives and mothers) and daughters were left behind.³⁷⁹

During the Korean War, northern churches were divided those that were between pro-Communist and those that were pro-capitalist. Depending on their ideological preferences, they cooperated either with the North or with the South, and finally chose one of the two Koreas. In the North, the NKCA represented the cooperation paradigm between church and state, while the FPJP group³⁸⁰ represented the opposition paradigm. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find any ecclesiastical efforts towards peace and reconciliation for the whole of Korea during the war, instead, the Christians were fully involved in the divisions that were tearing the country apart, some of them taking one side and others the other.

³⁷⁷ Young-bihn Lee and Sun-hwan Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 95-109.

³⁷⁸ Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung*, 186.

³⁷⁹ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, Lecturer, Kim Il Sung University, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

³⁸⁰ Concerning the FPJP, see the previous chapter.

2.2 The War and the Southern Churches

2.2.1 Christian Support for the War

From the establishment of Syngman Rhee's regime in the South, Protestant Christians were highly supportive of him. Rhee had been an exile in the USA during the Japanese colonial period. Therefore, he had little political background in Korea compared to other political leaders who had led the independence struggle in Korea and in China. To overcome this disadvantage, he allied with pro-Japanese,³⁸¹ American³⁸² and Christian political powers. He combined these three different groups under the slogan of anti-Communism.

Syngman Rhee (1876-1965) was born in an impoverished *yangban* family. During his studies in a mission school, he became a Christian. Later, he was educated in America with the support of Methodist missionaries. Rhee obtained a BA (international law) at George Washington University and a MA (politics) at Harvard. In 1910, he was then awarded a PhD in politics at Princeton University. He was the first Korean PhD student in America. After his PhD, he also studied theology (MDiv) at Princeton Theological Seminary. Rhee said that he would return to Korea to spread the Gospel after his study and indeed, when he did come home it was as a teacher at Seoul YMCA, and as a Methodist missionary.³⁸³

In 1919, he was elected as the first president of Korean Provisional Government (KPG) in Shanghai. However, Rhee was expelled from the KPG in 1925 for embezzlement agreeing to the superpowers having trusteeship over Korea. Thereafter, he lost his leadership of the independence movement and returned to America. When Korea was liberated, he came with the US army, and was later elected as the first president of South Korea with the support of

³⁸¹ When the majority of Korean people asked the removal of the Japanese legacy, he claimed that it was not necessary because it was time to fight with Communism. In accordance with his claim, the Pro-Japanese justified themselves as national security guards against the Communists and threatened whom maintained purging them by branding them as a mere tool of Communists. Kun-ho Song et al., *Haebang Jeonhusa eui Insik*, (A Recognition of History Before and After Liberation), vol. 1, 25.

³⁸² The USA considered him as pro-American future Korean president at the end of Japanese colonialism. See, R. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960*, Seoul, Pamun Books, 1979. "On his return he managed to gain considerable political power, aided by certain sectors of American occupation forces". S. MaCune, *Korea: Land of Broken Calm*, Princeton, D. van Nostrand Company, 1966, 101.

³⁸³ Concerning his early history, see, R. C. Allen, *Korea's Syngman Rhee*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1960.

the USAMGIK. He was finally expelled in 1960 due to the April Revolution, when he evacuated to Hawaii.³⁸⁴

Rhee was one of most favored political leaders among the Christians in Korea because he was an elder of the Methodist church, and he regarded Christianity as “a state religion of Korea”.³⁸⁵ In fact, he often expressed his intention of proclaiming Christianity as a state religion based on his evangelistic and fundamentalistic faith. He believed that through Christianization, Korea could become as modernized, wealthy and enlightened as America.³⁸⁶ Such intentions found favor with the Christian leaders. Rhodes and Campbell describe the relationship between Rhee and the Protestant leaders as “cordial and cooperative relationship”.³⁸⁷ However, Rhee did not put his idea of making Christianity a state religion because, as a practical politician, he necessary also had to consider the other religions present in the multi-religious Korean society. His religious ideas are nevertheless worth examining.

In Rhee's notion of Christianity as a state religion, his religious, political and personal motives were mixed. Firstly, he saw himself as a messianic figure; God had chosen him as president to evangelize Korean people.³⁸⁸ Secondly, he wanted to strengthen his links with American missionaries and the US government by promoting this idea of Christianity as a state religion. Lastly, he tried to make alliance with the Christians to grasp political power because of the educational background and nationalist tradition of the Christians, which ordinary people respected.

Christians had also been deeply involved in the original establishment of a separate South Korean state. In 1946, of fifty Koreans who were in official positions in the South Korean government, 35 were professing Christians. In 1946, of the ninety members of the Korean

³⁸⁴ Concerning his political life, see, R. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth*, Greenwood Publication Group, 1973.

³⁸⁵ N.B., There is no definite article in Korean language and “a state religion” seems a more accurate translation of Rhee's thought in this instance than “the state religion”. Concerning his religious idea, see, In-chul Kang, “Church and State under the USAMGIK and Syngman Rhee Regime”, in K. Oh et. al., *Church and State*, Inchon, Inchon Catholic University Press, 1997, 625-640.

³⁸⁶ In-chul Kang, *Hankuk Kidok Kyohoe wa Kukga, Simin Sahoe, 1945-1960*, (Korean Christian Churches, State and Civil Society, 1945-1960), Seoul, IKCH, 1996, 162.

³⁸⁷ Rhodes and Campbell, *Op. Cit.*, vol. 2, 381.

³⁸⁸ O. F. Nolde described him, “Rhee gave the impression of being an ardent Christian but also somewhat of a patriarch with a messianic complex”, “Confidential”, WCC Executive Committee, August 1953, Appendix 6, 2; Nolde stated further that Rhee often justified his political action by citing the Bible. See, O. F. Nolde, “Confidential Memorandum”, July 1953, 7.

Interim Legislative Assembly, the number of professing Christians was 21, including seven ordained ministers. In the first South Korean National Assembly, of 190 members, the number of Christians is reported to have been about fifty, of whom thirteen were ordained ministers. The vice president was Rev. Tai-young Ham, a Presbyterian minister.³⁸⁹

The Christians welcomed not only Rhee's notion of a state religion but also his anti-Communist stance because "to their fundamentalistic faith, Communism was based upon an unchangeable atheistic stance".³⁹⁰ The Christians went on further to support Rhee's reunification policy, *Bukjin Tongil* or Reunification by Invasion of the North. According to Wi-jo Kang, for the Christians, "it was unthinkable to sit and negotiate with the Communist 'devils' of the North" for the reunification.³⁹¹

The Protestant leaders who had fled before the war, after the policy of entering into political competition with the Communists in the North had failed, played a decisive role in spreading such ideas. Eun-kyun Hwang, the former leader of a Christian party in the North, stirred up the Christians in the South: "Atheist Bolsheviks are eradicating Christians in the North". "We must fight for freedom of faith and all Christians must rise to defeat the Communists!"³⁹² As we have already shown, however, it is difficult to find anything resembling religious persecution in 1947, when Hwang fled from the North. The Christians who had fled at that time were nevertheless committed to a religious justification of Rhee's reunification policy, which they promoted by exaggerating the religious situation in North Korea.

This assimilation paradigm between church and state in the South continued during the Korean War. The Christian support for the war was strong and broad. On 30th July 1950, the Protestant churches organized the Korean Christian National Relief Association. This began work in Taegu and Pusan and then extended its work to some 30 other centers, cooperating with the government's departments of Defense and Social Welfare.³⁹³ In addition to relief work, propaganda, mobilization and placation were also the main activities of this organization. Heung-soo Kim states that "the most important task of the Association was

³⁸⁹ Rhodes and Campbell, *Ibid.*, 379-380.

³⁹⁰ Kwang-sun Suh, *The Korean Minjung in Christ*, 57.

³⁹¹ Wi-jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea*, 78.

³⁹² Eun-kyoon Hwang, "The 38th Parallel and Christian Youth", in *Buheung*, (The Revival), vol. 8, 1948, 3-4.

³⁹³ Concerning the association, see, A. D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, 247-295.

mobilizing Christian young men and sending them to the battle line”.³⁹⁴ It seems true that the Association was not merely for relief work. For example, in August 1950, the Association mobilized about 3,000 Christian young men and in October, sent about 1,000 Christian Placation Unit workers to the North.³⁹⁵

Just as the NKCA justified the war as a holy war against American imperialists, so too the southern churches presented it as a crusade war against the “Red Devils”, the Communists. On 28th September 1950, when Seoul was recaptured, the churches organized a worship for victory, inviting Rhee and MacArthur. In this worship, the church leaders defined the war as a “crusade war” and called for a roll back further into the North.³⁹⁶ The leaders thought that it would be impossible to cultivate Christianity in a Marxist land. Therefore, the roll back was given a religious justification. It was presented as necessary in order to transform the northern society and ensure religious freedom.

However, this expectation was not achieved, because the Allied army had to retreat again within a few months. A re-evacuation to the South was carried on due to the retreat. Some twenty thousand Christians and a thousand pastors were evacuated by the US army with the support of American missionaries to Cheju island.³⁹⁷ This evacuation meant that lay people in the South were left without pastors, and they therefore had the same kind of experience as lay people in the North. Won-ryong Kang stated that one day most pastors disappeared without notice from their congregations. Again, he raised the ethical issue of ministry during the war: how could pastors evacuate while their congregations remained behind?³⁹⁸

2.2.2 Demonstrations against the Truce Talks

By the spring of 1951, the Allies realized that victory was impossible in the immediate future. The truce talks began in July 1951. However, Rhee was not happy about opening these peace talks because he believed that defeating Communism was the only way of unifying Korea. Instead of the truce talk, Rhee introduced his own schemes: “1) March to the Yalu, 2) all

³⁹⁴ Heung-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 60.

³⁹⁵ In-chul Kang, “Church and State under the USAMGIK and Syngman Rhee Regime”, *Op. Cit.*, 634.

³⁹⁶ MacArthur said on this occasion that he is fighting with “Grace of God” and winning with the “Guidance of God”. See, In-seo Kim, *Mangmyung Noin Rhee Syng Man Baksa rul Byunhoham*, (A Defense for An Elderly Exile, Dr. Syngman Rhee), Seoul, Dokhak Hyuphoe Chulpansa, 1963, 85.

³⁹⁷ A. D. Clark, *Op. Cit.*, 248.

³⁹⁸ Won-ryong Kang, *Binduleseo*, 339-342.

foreign troops leave, 3) separate ROK military action, 4) 90 day limit on political conference with commitment by the US to start fighting”.³⁹⁹ O.F. Nolde, the director of the WCC’s Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), bitterly criticized Rhee’s schemes after meeting with him, saying that it seemed as if he wanted “to commit national suicide”.⁴⁰⁰

However, Southern Christians continuously supported Rhee on the issue of the cease-fire. Even before the truce talks started, the Christians had sent a message to the Secretary General of UN, to the President of US and to the General Commander of the Allied army insisting that “there must not be a cease-fire until the final victory”.⁴⁰¹ This Christian anti-truce stance was strengthened when the talks began. On 4th December 1952, the Special Committee of Korean Ministers from all the mainline churches in Korea, including the Roman Catholic Church, held an anti-truce demonstration and sent a letter to US the President-elect D. Eisenhower, who maintained the truce, saying:

We earnestly desire that you will do all possible to bring the war in Korea to a successful and speedy close, effecting at the same time the unification of our entire country.⁴⁰²

Of course, this bringing the war to a “close” was supposed to be accomplished by defeating the Communists, not by a cease-fire. Already millions of civilians and soldiers had been killed because of this war, but the ministers still asked Eisenhower to re-expand the war. Eisenhower, however, refused, and ensured that the cease-fire and the truce talks went ahead.

When the truce talks were rapidly developing in June 1953, a series of Christian anti-truce demonstrations were organized in most major cities in South Korea.⁴⁰³ On 15th June, the southern churches made a statement to the world churches in English, saying:

Yet, unreasonable as it may seem to the unenlightened, the whole population of Korea and her government are opposed to the now proposed cease-fire...Any

³⁹⁹ O. F. Nolde, “Confidential Memorandum”, July 1953, 9.

⁴⁰⁰ Nolde, *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁰¹ “Message to the Secretary General of UN, the President of US and General Commander of the Allied Army”, Korean Christian Conference, 27th December 1950.

⁴⁰² “From the Special Committee of Korean Christian Ministers to His Excellency, President-elect of the United States of America General Dwight D. Eisenhower”, 4th December 1952, Archival no. Korea-67, Division of Foreign Missions, NCCCUSA.

⁴⁰³ In Seoul, 7,000 Christians gathered on 14th, and in Pusan, 10,000 crowded on 15th June 1953. The rally was also held in Incheon, Chungju, Kwangju and Taegu. See, Heung-soo Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 63.

attempt at compromise with them can be linked to an attempt at forcing Christ to compromise with the devil during His forty days in the wilderness...1. (It is) Not by appeasing but by subduing the Communists can Korea have unification...3. The UN can restore justice and righteousness in the world only by nullifying Communism.⁴⁰⁴

The Korean version⁴⁰⁵ of the statement was even more hostile to the cease-fire. It stated, "The Christians must not reconcile with the Communists" because "they are devils who cannot repent forever".⁴⁰⁶ The Christians also express their disappointment with Eisenhower because of his efforts for the truce.⁴⁰⁷ It seems that an anti-Communism ideology overwhelmed the issue of the cease-fire in 1953 within the southern churches.

One major cause of this phenomenon was the uncritical relationship between church and state in South Korea. For instance, there was a rumor that the NCKC received financial support from the government in organizing the above demonstrations. The General Secretary of NCKC recognized that he received such support from a Christian member of the National Assembly.⁴⁰⁸ As a matter of fact, these demonstrations were organized under the instigation of Rhee, who needed a strengthened anti-Communist drive for maintaining his political power after the war. This would help him to avoid any possible criticism from his political opponents, who accused him of responsibility for the outbreak of the war and for its consequences. Nolde points out that Rhee designated the Day of National Prayer on 4th July 1953. This was a high point of the Christian anti-truce demonstrations.⁴⁰⁹

The Christian anti-truce stance in the South strengthened the Communists' hostility to Christianity in the North. The southern Christians thought that in the red North, "neither churches nor missions can continue,"⁴¹⁰ and put all the blame wholly on the Communists. Their own anti-truce activities, however, were themselves one of the causes of the hostility the Communists would show towards the northern Christians.

⁴⁰⁴ "A Statement of Korea Christians", The Christian Conference for Saving Country, 15th June 1953.

⁴⁰⁵ The statement was made in Korean as well for a domestic propaganda purpose.

⁴⁰⁶ The Korean version is taken from Yang-sun Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 140-143.

⁴⁰⁷ See, "From Korean Christians to His Excellency, President Dwight D. Eisenhower", 15th June 1953 in Yang-sun Kim, *Ibid.*, 142-143

⁴⁰⁸ *The Kidokongbo*, 22nd and 29th June 1953.

⁴⁰⁹ O. F. Nolde, "Confidential Memorandum", July 1953, 8. N.B., Nolde met Rhee at 11:30 a.m. on 3rd July 1953.

⁴¹⁰ "From H. Namkung to Dr. Decker", cablegram, 26th January 1950. Rev. Dr. H. Namkung was general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea.

2.2.3 Just War and Anti-Communist Ideology

It is possible for Christian churches to support a just war.⁴¹¹ The doctrine of *justum bellum* or just war constitutes the dominant teaching of the mainline churches concerning war.⁴¹² Even though the notion of “just war” originated before,⁴¹³ in Christian theology, both Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas established it as a part of Christian doctrine. Based upon Augustine’s view of war,⁴¹⁴ Aquinas argued that a war is justified when three basic, necessary conditions were met: 1) the war was prosecuted by a lawful authority; 2) the war was undertaken with just cause and means; 3) the war was undertaken with right intention.⁴¹⁵ In the middle ages, the idea of holy war (crusade) developed under the authority of the church, not the state as such. The aim of a “just war” was for the secular power to preserve justice, but the goal of a crusade was to uphold, preserve and expand the dominion of the Christian church.⁴¹⁶

During the reformation period, the doctrine of just war developed in two ways. Jean Calvin took the first cautious step towards allowing for a just revolution.⁴¹⁷ John Knox went further, allowing people’s rebellion against tyrannies.⁴¹⁸ Based on the reformation tradition, the just war doctrine, which had been “written from perspective of the dominant classes”, was “re-

⁴¹¹ Concerning the just war, see, J. B. Elshtain ed., *Just War Theory*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1992; J. T. Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical inquiry*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981; B. T. Adeney, *Just War, Political Realism and Faith*, London, Scarecrow Press, 1988; J. Kelsy and J. T. Johnson ed., *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theological Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*, New York, Greenwood, 1991.

⁴¹² On the other hand, pacifism is a controversial tradition in Christian theology. Pacifism has always been a minority tradition in Christian history. Figures who followed it include Francis of Assisi, and the left wing of the reformation e.g. the Mennonites, the Anabaptists and the Quakers in the 17th Century. Concerning pacifism, see, D. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation*, New York, Abingdon; J. H. Yoder, *Nevertheless: A Meditation on the Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*, Scottdale, Herald Press, 1971; D. A. Drombrowski, *Christian Pacifism*, Temple University Press, 1991.

⁴¹³ It is traceable back to the classical teaching of Cicero. See, C. Villa-Vincencio, “Just War”, *Dictionary of Ecumenical Movement*, 552.

⁴¹⁴ For Augustine, for a war to be just, it must be fought for the right reasons, and it must be waged under rightful authority. See, R. A. McCormick, “Morality of War”, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 14, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, 803.

⁴¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II, II, Q, Article 1, tr. by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Westminster, Christian Classics, 1981.

⁴¹⁶ R. S. Hoyt and S. Chodorow, *Europe in Middle Ages*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976, 319-320.

⁴¹⁷ See, L. H. Hunt ed., *Calvinism and the Political Order*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1966.

⁴¹⁸ See, K. Ross, *Presbyterian Theology and Participatory Democracy*.

written from the poor and oppressed” as a theology of just revolution in modern Christianity.⁴¹⁹ On the other hand, Hugo Grotius, a 16th Century Dutch Protestant, developed a secularized just war theory by emphasizing the role of international law in providing just criteria.⁴²⁰ After Grotius, just war theory was widely recognized in the international arena at the end of the World War II.⁴²¹

However, just war theory has been abused over the years to legitimate unjust wars by secular powers.⁴²² Moreover, modern warfare is total war, which brings mass destruction and indiscriminate civilian casualties. In the times of Augustine and Aquinas, war was in a smaller scale and the causes were clear, but modern wars are more complex, and it is much more difficult to judge where and whether they are just. Therefore, WCC in Amsterdam in 1948 identified three possible positions that Christians might take towards a modern war, without reaching a larger consensus: 1) limited participation in a particular circumstance, 2) fulfilling a Christian duty to defend the law by force, and 3) refusing all kinds of military service (pacifism).⁴²³

In this context, when the modern churches support modern wars, this should only be done after careful consideration of the nature of secular political power. In particular, when the churches become involved not only in spiritual and charitable support but also give direct support, such as providing arms and encouraging mobilization, they must do so from the perspective of the poor and oppressed. Every war can bring about an abnormal situation, reason being overcome by hostility. Therefore, caring and healing the hurts of the war and assisting human beings to recover the “image of God” must be a distinctive mission of churches in modern wars.

⁴¹⁹ C. Villa-Vincencio, *Op. Cit.*, 553

⁴²⁰ For Grotius, a war is just if three basic criteria were met: 1) a danger faced by the nation is immediate; 2) the force used is necessary to adequately defend the nation’s interest; and 3) the use of force is proportionate to the threatened danger. See, J. D. Tooke, *The Just War in Aquinas and Grotius*, London, SPCK, 1965.

⁴²¹ The notion of just war in the Nuremberg Charter and the UN Charter were based on the idea of Aquinas and Grotius.

⁴²² Concerning the criticisms on just war theory, see, P. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?*, North California, Duke University Press, 1961; M. Walzer, *Just and Unjust War: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, New York, Basic Books, 1977; J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 2nd ed., Grand Rapids, Eerdermans, 1994

⁴²³ C. Villa-Vincencio, *Op. Cit.*, 553.

However, when Korea fought under the name of reunification, most of the Korean churches failed to demonstrate such a distinctive Christian identity because of their anti-Communism. Christian antipathy to the Communists was developed as an ideology during the war. Here is a quotation from a statement of the Korean CCIA, which shows the way in which the southern Christian understanding of the war was dominated by an anti-Communist perspective:

Communism means sin. Therefore, no appeasement can be allowed, we must stand firm to expel it. If we treat the Communist as we do our enemies, and love them, it is nothing but the same as if we loved the devil and try ourselves in vain, to make it (*sic*, him) repent...Commission (*sic*, Communism) is worse than war itself and sure to bring more disaster...we ask you again to join with us to form the (*sic*, a) crusade to undertake our full responsibilities till Communism is wiped out of the world.⁴²⁴

Here, the leaders of the South Korean churches regarded the Communists as satanic and therefore outside the realm of divine salvation. "A sinner may rather easily repent but not the Communists."⁴²⁵ For them, the Communists were unforgivable devils, who were outside the Grace of Christ. The statement went on further, "Appeasement with Communism is irreligious, unjust, and against all moral principles."⁴²⁶ Therefore, they understood the Korean War as a crusade to wipe out the devils, the Communists. Based upon this understanding, the southern churches rejected the cease-fire and called for re-opening the war. This statement shows how strongly the churches had become captive to an anti-Communist ideology, even after the armistice that brought the Korean War to an end.

It is questionable whether any other responses or arguments concerning the just war were put forward within the southern churches during the Korean War. Of course, there might have been, but it is difficult to find any written discussions of this. At this point, it should be remembered that even before the war, the most important Christian independence movement leaders, who were Rhee's political rivals, including Kim Ku, the former president of Korean Provisional Government, and Ryo Un-hyung, the Chairperson of the National People's Committee, had been assassinated at Rhee's instigation.⁴²⁷ These leaders did not favor Rhee's proposal of establishing a separate state, nor did they approve the idea of *Bukjin Tongil*. They also met Kim Il-sung to discuss the possibilities of peaceful reunification, against Rhee's

⁴²⁴ Korea Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, The Statement to the Second Full Meeting of the CCIA at the Chicago University, 1954.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ Only recently, the documentary evidences of this instigation were found at the US national archives. See, *Associate Press*, 4th September 2001.

Reunification by Invasion of the North. Moreover, Kim and Ryu were more popular and respected leaders among the Korean people than Rhee. Finally, it has to be noted that Rhee removed his Christian political rivals not only by MaCarthyist attacks but also by assassinating them. In this atmosphere, although somebody had a criticism on the war, it was almost impossible to speak out because of the tyrannical oppression of Rhee. Consequently, we can hardly find any other written responses by Christians on the war in this period.⁴²⁸

Both the Korean churches in the North (the NKCA) and in the South justified the Korean War as a just war. However, as we studied, the NKCA supported the war and proclaimed the just war without proper theological argument. On the other hand, the southern Christians justified the war on the basis of their anti-Communism, rather than on any more developed or deeper theological reasoning.

2.3 The War and the World Council of Churches

2.3.1 WCC Toronto Statement

As a civil war in a Far Eastern country expanded into an international collision between the East and the West, not only the Korean churches but also churches around the world split into two positions on the Korean War, according to their ideological preferences. The WCC issued what was called its Toronto Statement on the Korean War on 13th July 1950, and this brought an ideological conflict between eastern and western churches. The statement influenced the Communist understanding on Christianity in North Korea as well. Therefore, it is necessary to examine it in detail.

From the beginning of the war, the recently established WCC had paid deep attention to the war. On the morning of 26th June 1950, C. Ranson, General Secretary of the International Missionary Council (IMC) received the following cable from H. Namkung, General Secretary of the NCKK:

⁴²⁸ Especially, it was difficult to argue against the notion of *Bukjin Tongil* because the National Security Law banned any discussion on the war and reunification except it. Even in 1960, Cho Bong-am, the leader of Socialist Party, was executed because he maintained peaceful reunification against Rhee's *Bukjin Tongil*.

Large invading forces are pressing all around us. Begging immediate help from USA. Use your best influence.⁴²⁹

Replies were sent on the same day by Ranson (IMC) and Nolde (CCIA) to Namkung and G. Paik as follows:

Moved by Korean tragedy, CCIA maintaining contact with United Nations and conferring with church leaders about representation to United States government.⁴³⁰

After consultation with officials of the WCC and the IMC, the director of the CCIA addressed a letter to the Secretary General of the UN on 26th June⁴³¹:

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, in seeking world peace with justice, emphasizes the duty of Christians to support negotiation rather than primary reliance upon arms as an instrument of policy.⁴³²

The CCIA began by calling for a peaceful measures to be used to solve the Korean conflict. Its initial letter to the UN was similar to the Yugoslav resolution at the Security Council. However, this stance of the CCIA's was dramatically reversed within a week. At the executive committee meeting of the CCIA, which was held from 3rd-5th July, in Toronto, prior to the third Central Committee Meeting of the WCC,⁴³³ the drafts of a letter "to all Christians in Korea", a statement on the Korean situation and a prayer were submitted.⁴³⁴ At the debate on these drafts, Reinhold Niebuhr strongly insisted on the necessity of a "police measure" in Korea, and M. Niemöller supported it.⁴³⁵ R. M. Fagley, who also favored Truman's "police action," had drafted the statement.⁴³⁶

⁴²⁹ "From H. Namkung to International Missionary Council", cable on 26th June 1950. This cable was delivered to US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson by Dr. Brumbaugh representing the Methodist Division of Foreign Mission. "From Brumbaugh to Acheson", cable on 27th June 1950.

⁴³⁰ "From Nolde to G. Paik", cable on 26th June 1950.

⁴³¹ The CCIA was a commission co-founded by the IMC and the WCC. For that reason, the consultation was necessary. Concerning the CCIA, see, N. Lossky et. al. ed., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva, WCC, 1991, 203; 487; 525; 530; 532; 681.

⁴³² "From Nolde to the Honorable Trygve Lie", 26th June 1950.

⁴³³ Concerning the CCIA and the Central Committee meeting in relation to the Korean War, see also the following newspapers, *The Living Church*, No.3, 16th July 1950, 5-6; No. 5, 30th July 1950, 5-6; *The Moravian*, 30th September 1950, 3-8; *British Weekly*, 27th July 1950; *The Guardian*, 4th August 1950; *The Christian World*, 27th July 1950; *The English Churchman*, 28th July 1950; *The Christian Century*, 26th July 1950; *This Week in the Lutheran*, 19th July, 1950, 12.

⁴³⁴ O. F. Nolde, "The Korean Situation from the Standpoint of Certain Actions by the CCIA and related Christian Bodies", 24th June 1953, 2-3.

⁴³⁵ "Minutes and Reports of the Third Meeting of Central Committee of the World Council of Churches", Toronto, 9-15 July 1950, 26-27.

⁴³⁶ R. M. Fragley was the co-secretary for the Department of International Justice and Goodwill, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. He was a close advisor to Dulles and Nolde on Korean matters. See, "From Nolde to Fagley", 14th May 1947. Just before the statement, he

The Central Committee of the WCC then met from 9th-13th July 1950, also at Toronto, and appointed Niebuhr and Niemöller to revise the draft statement.⁴³⁷ It then adopted unanimously the final version of the statement, which was published as “The Korean Situation and World Order,”⁴³⁸ the letter, “To All Christians in Korea” and the “Prayer” on 13th July.⁴³⁹ The statement on “The Korean Situation and World Order” was immediately controversial, even within the WCC. There were serious arguments over the second sentence of the third paragraph, which read:

The conflict in Korea reveals the precarious nature of peace and security in the world today. The World Council of Churches expresses its deep concern and calls upon its members as a world-wide Christian fellowship to pray for Korea, where guilty and innocent suffer or perish together, and to bear witness to Christ as Lord of all life and as Prince of peace.

An act of aggression has been committed. The United Nations Commission in Korea, the most objective witness available, asserts that “all evidence points to a calculated, coordinated attack prepared and launched with secrecy” by North Korean troops.

Armed attack as an instrument of national policy is wrong. We therefore commend the United Nations, an instrument of world order, for its prompt decision to meet this aggression and for authorizing a police measure which every member nation should support.⁴⁴⁰

The main argument was whether the church could support the use of world military forces for a civil war. Niemöller said, “We in Germany do not think of what is happening in Korea as war, but police action against armed violence in defiance of authority”.⁴⁴¹ Niebuhr went on further with emphasizing its significance: “This is the first time in the modern world that a police action has been taken by the community of nations. We support it in this statement, as

wrote, “United Nations Memorandum: The Korean Situation”, Series 3, No. 9, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. In this report, he strongly supported the US and UN positions on the Korean War. He also sent a secret memo to Nolde as follows: “A unified Korea under the Soviet domination would be a grave menace to Japan. A Korea under Western control would be regarded as an intolerable threat to Vladivostok. It might be that some division of Korea would be necessary for an eventual settlement”. R. M. Fagley, “Confidential Notes on Interview”, 21st July 1950, 1.

⁴³⁷ “From Fagley to Benedict”, 3rd April 1970. *The Christian Century*, 26th July 1950, reported that Charles P. Taft drafted the statement. However, the author considers that Fagley’s letter is correct because *The Christian Century* described Taft as the chairman. At that time, however, Kenneth G. Grubb was the chairman of CCIA. See the names of CCIA honorary officers, “From Nolde to J. F. Dulles” on 28th June 1950,

⁴³⁸ See, Appendix D.

⁴³⁹ The Third Central Committee Meeting of the WCC was held from 9-15 July 1950 in Toronto, Canada. Concerning the meeting, see, “Minutes and Reports of the Third Meeting of Central Committee of the World Council of Churches”, Toronto, 9-15 July 1950.

⁴⁴⁰ WCC Central Committee, “The Korean Situation and World Order”, 13th July 1950, Toronto, Canada.

⁴⁴¹ *The Christian Century*, 26th July 1950.

we should.”⁴⁴²

However, F. Haslam gave a counter-argument: “A world organization speaking for Christ should not make such a statement as this. I doubt whether this action in Korea can rightly be called a police action”.⁴⁴³ T. C. Chao from China, one of presidents of WCC, also protested against the Statement, “Which sounds so much like the voice of Wall Street.”⁴⁴⁴ He had a doubt about the political transparency of the police action.

As we will see later, this was merely the beginning of the argument within WCC whether the statement was proper or not. Finally, the Statement was adopted by a vote of 45 to 2. Only two pacifists opposed the resolution, including a representative of the Quakers. However, the vote was taken in the absence of the delegations from the Eastern European churches, who were not able to take part in the Central Committee meeting, due to their being unable to obtain entry visas to Canada.⁴⁴⁵

It is mysterious how the WCC, which had originally urged negotiation rather than military action, suddenly altered its stance to that of supporting the UN’s “police action”. Within a mere nine days, they were approving the use of military force in Korea. How was it possible for the WCC to justify military action, and called for “all UN member nations to support it”, so very quickly after the outbreak of the Korean War?⁴⁴⁶

There were two reasons behind this alteration. Firstly, the CCIA was influenced by the UN. After sending the letter to the UN on 26th June, the CCIA received the report of the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK), which condemned only North Korea as the invader in the war.⁴⁴⁷ No blame was laid at the door of South Korea. The WCC did not realize at all that South Korea had also intended an invasion towards the North, and had launched local attacks. The WCC did not perceive that the credibility of the UNCOK report was problematic

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ Quoted from W. A. Visser’t Hooft, *W. A. Visser’t Hooft: Memories*, London, SCM Press, 1973, 224.

⁴⁴⁵ *The Living Church*, 30th July 1950.

⁴⁴⁶ The UN sent a letter of appreciation to WCC: “Your approval and support of the United Nations is very much appreciated indeed”. “From Francoise Dony to O. F. Nolde”, 7th August 1950.

⁴⁴⁷ Report of the United Nations Commission on Korea, A/1350, Part One: Aggression. The CCIA mainly depended for their information on the war on UN sources. See, CCIA, “Development in Korea: As Reported in United Nations Documents”, January 1951.

because parts of it had been written before the war.⁴⁴⁸ The approval of “police action” was altogether too hasty a response to the war on the part of a council representing churches throughout the world. It was based on one-sided information on the Korean situation, and those involved in drafting or approving the WCC resolution had insufficient knowledge of what was really happening.

Secondly, after the Security Council adopted the US resolution on 27th June, the American voice dominated both the CCIA executive committee and the WCC Central Committee Meeting.⁴⁴⁹ Fagley drafted and Niebuhr revised the statement.⁴⁵⁰ Both of them were strong supporters of Truman’s slogan of “police action” against the Communists.⁴⁵¹ Behind this domination of the American voice, which led the WCC to support the “police action,” promoted first by Truman then by the UN, there was J. F. Dulles,⁴⁵² who had a been awareness of the importance of “churches’ functions” in the ideological struggle with the Communists.

2.3.2 J. F. Dulles: An Invisible Hand

J. F. Dulles was a politician, diplomat, lawyer and an important leader in the early history of the CCIA, and had addressed the inaugural assembly of WCC in 1948, at Amsterdam.⁴⁵³ The elder son of a Presbyterian minister, he was born in 1888. He was educated in Princeton (Philosophy), the Sorbonne (International Law) and George Washington Law School, and started his career as a lawyer. After participating in the Paris Peace Congress, he became a diplomat. He was US ambassador and delegate to the UN before becoming a Senator and Truman’s advisor in 1950. He was appointed as US Secretary of State during the Korean War.

⁴⁴⁸ B. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 265.

⁴⁴⁹ US had the largest number of commissioners including Dulles, one of strongest leaders and Nolde, the Director of CCIA. See, *The Living Church*, 16th July 1950.

⁴⁵⁰ In fact, Niebuhr was not a Central Committee member. He was invited as alternative member. “From Fagley to Benedict”, 3rd April 1970.

⁴⁵¹ “I do not think that a Christian who is not a pacifist can possibly advise a particularly Christian solution for Korean conflict. It is a part of our total struggle with world Communism...”, R. Niebuhr, “No Christian Peace in Korea?”, *The Christian Century*, 4th February 1953, 127.

⁴⁵² M. A. Guhin, *John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times*, New York, Colombia University Press, 1972, 119.

⁴⁵³ In Amsterdam, Dulles emphasized that WCC should be in the frontline of anti-Communism, See, J. F. Dulles, “The Christian Citizen in a Changing World”, WCC ed., *The Church and the International Disorder*, London, SCM Press, 1948, 73-114.

In M. A. Guhin's opinion Dulles provided the moral and philosophical basis on which US diplomacy has rested since the beginning of the 1950s.⁴⁵⁴

He was a religious man, with a strong sense of missionary zeal, which he had received from his home environment.⁴⁵⁵ In the ecumenical movement, he started his journey by participating in the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937. There, he experienced an "intellectual conversion". "In the conference, he had wondered if Christianity would survive such formidable rivals as Communism and fascism".⁴⁵⁶ He had a sort of "utilitarian view of religion," especially in terms of social utility.⁴⁵⁷ His conversion meant an awakening to the possible Christian contribution to the development of international order.⁴⁵⁸ Dulles maintained that "to create the moral foundation for world order is the task of the churches".⁴⁵⁹

Later, in the cold war context, Dulles started to combine his conservative faith, moralistic internationalism and anti-Communism.⁴⁶⁰ He emphasized "churches' functions" in order to "coincide" with "the particular interest of the United States and the West" against Communism.⁴⁶¹ He understood that the US, a leading Christian country, had the moral power to fight against the atheistic Soviet Union, as a crusade.⁴⁶² For him, Christianity and Communism were "irreconcilable".⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁴ M. A. Guhin, *Ibid.*, 11-57.

⁴⁵⁵ "Almost every work on the subject of Dulles draw some attention to the idea that an understanding of the man and his policy preferences involves considerations of his religious home environment, strong religious convictions, a sense of Christian mission, and a subsequent universalization of missionary zeal.", M. A. Guhin, *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁵⁶ M. A. Guhin, *Op. Cit.*, 119. See also, D. McCreary, "John Bennett on Oxford '37", *Christian Century*, 28th October 1987, 942-944.

⁴⁵⁷ Concerning his thought at Oxford, see, J. F. Dulles, "The Problem of Peace in a Dynamic World", Marquess of Lothian et al., *The Universal Church and the World of Nations*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1938, 145-168.

⁴⁵⁸ "The religious movement throughout the country and elsewhere could create the underlying conditions indispensable to the attainment of better international order by educating the public...", J. F. Dulles, "The American Churches and International Situation", Biennial Report of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, New York, 1940, 22.

⁴⁵⁹ J. F. Dulles, "Dulles Statement for Manual of Layman's Missionary Movement", Unpublished Paper, 4th April 1945, The J. F. Dulles Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

⁴⁶⁰ Concerning the development of Dulles' thought in international politics, see, M. G. Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles, From Prophet of Realism to Priest of Nationalism*, Mercer University Press, 1985.

⁴⁶¹ M. A. Guhin, *Op. Cit.*, 119.

⁴⁶² "We wanted our example to stimulate liberating forces throughout the world and create a climate in which despotism would shrink. In fact, we did just that...Americans are people of faith. They have always had a sense of mission and willingness to sacrifice to achieve great goals." J. F. Dulles,

Dulles was not only exercised powerful leadership in the field of international diplomacy but also in the ecumenical movement.⁴⁶⁴ For example, when the CCIA was established in 1946, he influenced the election of the Chairman and the appointment of Director.⁴⁶⁵ It seems that most CCIA members were eager to be close with him,⁴⁶⁶ even Visser't Hooft,⁴⁶⁷ because of his influence in international politics. Visser't Hooft invited him as one of main speakers at the Amsterdam Assembly. When he used his speech to emphasize the idea Christian anti-Communism, he faced a serious count-argument by another speaker, J. Hromádka, who criticized Western capitalistic civilization from a biblical perspective.⁴⁶⁸ After a long debate, the WCC criticized both Communism and capitalism, and suggested in their place the notion of the "responsible society".⁴⁶⁹

"Address by United States Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, before the Associated Press in New York, April 22, 1957", in *The Department of State Bulletin*, 6th May 1957, 715-719; see also, "America's Role in the Peace", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 4, 1945, 2-6. N.B., He had strong tendency towards "McCarthyism". In the senate election, he used traditional MaCarthyist attacks on his rival, the nominee of the Democrats. See, M. A. Guhin, *Ibid.*, 124-128.

⁴⁶³ J. F. Dulles, "The Christian Citizen in a Changing World", 91.

⁴⁶⁴ George Bell, the first Chairperson of the Central Committee, WCC recognized his leadership in founding CCIA. The Bishop of Chichester, "Opening Address at the Meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC at Lucknow", *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 5, 1953, 229-232: Concerning his leadership in international affairs of ecumenical movement, see also, R. M. Fagley, "The Churches and the Peace Patrol", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 27th November 1950, 158-159; J. C. Bennett, "Mr. Dulles Proposal", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 12, 9th June 1952, 73-74.

⁴⁶⁵ "I am glad that Baron van Asbeck will act as Chairman, and I greatly hope that Grubb will be a Director". "From J. F. Dulles to Visser't Hooft", 23rd September 1946.

⁴⁶⁶ Especially American members like Nolde, Decker, Fagley...etc. Here is an example how WCC treated Dulles: "Dr. Visser't Hooft and I...we are eager to have your help. Even if you only give us a few paragraphs of informal comment they will be helpful". "From S. M. Cavert to J. F. Dulles" 3rd December 1945. Of course he was not such a person, who could give some practical assistance to the Provisional Committee of WCC. Even Dulles could not participate most ecumenical meetings because of his busy schedule: e.g. "regret impossible visit Switzerland planning return Washington as soon as..." "From J. F. Dulles to Visser't Hooft" cable on 27th September 1945. However, WCC often sent similar letters to him to make a good relationship.

⁴⁶⁷ Visser't Hooft, the first general secretary sent several letters to meet him. "From Visser't Hooft to J. F. Dulles", 15th May 1945; Cable on 21st September 1945; 17th September 1946 etc.

⁴⁶⁸ "The speaker preceding him was John Foster Dulles, later US Secretary of State. Their respective addresses represented two opposing views on the international situation as a whole. That sparkling exchange and the discussion it provoked have been recalled ever since as one of the highlight of the first WCC Assembly". M. Opocensky ed., *Josef L. Hromádka: The Field is the World*, Prague, Christian Peace Conference, 1990, 253; See also, J. Hromádka, "The Church and Today's International Situation", in *Ibid.*, 253-260.

⁴⁶⁹ Concerning the Responsible Society, see, WCC ed., *The Responsible Society, Christian Action in Society: An Ecumenical Inquiry*, Geneva, WCC, 1949.

Dulles was expected to be absent from the Toronto meeting of the WCC in 1950 because he had just returned from Korea.⁴⁷⁰ However, although he was an extremely busy person, being one of three key decision makers of US foreign policy,⁴⁷¹ he still managed to get there.⁴⁷² At the meeting, the influence of his presence was enormous because he had visited Korea from 18th June until the outbreak of the war both as the head of UN Field Observers and as the US special envoy to Korea. Moreover, he was the main figure involved in drafting UNCOK's report on the Korean War on 26th June in Japan. Dulles was the only person who could give a detailed description of the war at the Toronto meeting. He also encouraged the American CCIA members, Nolde, Fagley and Niebuhr, to support the UN's police action in the statement they drafted and may have ensured that they were the ones who effectively wrote all the drafts. Chinese church leaders criticized the role Dulles played in regard to the WCC's Toronto Statement in the following terms:

The person who was actually directing the World Council of Churches to pass this resolution (The Toronto Statement) was no other than Dulles.⁴⁷³

Even in the West, there was also a criticism of Dulles' role in the CCIA, especially in regard to the issue of the Toronto statement. Bishop E. H. Burgmann, a CCIA commissioner, voiced the criticism that Dulles was dangerous to the CCIA, because he used the CCIA for the purpose of US international politics and for his own business. Burgmann warned the WCC that if it did not cease its relationship with him, it would find itself in difficulty.⁴⁷⁴

We can conclude that behind the American delegates who led the WCC into changing its stance on the Korean War, there stands the influential figure of J. F. Dulles. It is clear that Dulles desperately wanted the WCC to support the "police action" in Korea. Indeed, he thought such support so important that he took the time and trouble to go personally to Toronto to ensure that he got it, in spite of all the other pressing business he had to attend to on account of the emergency situation. This demonstrates how much his "utilitarian view" on Christianity mattered to him, and how essential it was to his overall political strategy. It

⁴⁷⁰ "From O. F. Nolde to J. F. Dulles", 28th June 1950.

⁴⁷¹ According to P. Lowe, they were President Truman, State Secretary Acheson and Special Advisor to the President, Dulles. See, P. Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 183-187.

⁴⁷² "The members from US are following: John Foster Dulles, Dr. O. Frederik Nolde...", *The Living Church*, 16th July 1950, 5.

⁴⁷³ "A Joint Statement from the Representatives of Protestant Churches and Organizations of China", 21st April 1951.

⁴⁷⁴ E. H. Burgmann, "World Council Group Wants China in UN", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 11, 1951, 32.

should also be remembered that he gained his diplomatic reputation by leading the establishment of UN as the US delegate. Lastly, he had recently demonstrated himself as an expert on Korea and Japan.⁴⁷⁵

It was also Dulles' intention to use the WCC's support as a moral weapon in the propaganda war. After the Security Council had decided, on 27th June, the police action, the UN faced two serious challenges. One was a legal criticism because the Council reached this decision without Soviet approval. The other was that it was predicted that China would intervene in the war in reaction against the UN's intervention. In this circumstance, Truman and Dulles needed a strong moral justification for the police action.⁴⁷⁶ Finally, Dulles, with his functional view of Christianity's role in international order, intended to utilize the WCC for this justification, by getting it to issue a supportive statement for the police action.⁴⁷⁷ Indeed, Dulles regarded the WCC as one of the best international organizations for the moral justification of Truman's police action.

As we will see in Part Three, the WCC recognized later that its statement had been biased towards the Western and South Korean position, and acknowledged that the CCIA had worked closely with the UN for authorizing the police action.⁴⁷⁸ All this was admitted years later, in the Central Committee Meeting of the WCC in 1989.

⁴⁷⁵ See, P. Lowe, *Op. Cit.*, 183-186.

⁴⁷⁶ "It could be possible that Truman consulted with Dulles using WCC for the justification.", Interview with the former Bishop of Oxford, Patrick Rodger, former Associate General Secretary of WCC, 5th February 2001, Edinburgh; "Dulles was possible to act in Toronto by Truman's order". Interview with Dr. Seong-won Park, Executive Secretary of Cooperation and Witness, WARC, 17th January 2001, Geneva; Interview with D. Epps, Director of CCIA, WCC, 15th January 2001, Geneva. N.B., as we will study later, the newly established WCC was in difficult for a long time because of this statement. Of course, WCC kept some distance with Dulles thereafter.

⁴⁷⁷ N.B., There was another case that Truman tried to utilize WCC for his anti-Communist international politics. Myron Taylor, another Truman man suggested to WCC in 1950: "The President would invite the heads of the Christian churches to come to Washington and to work together on a joint statement concerning peace and concerning resistance to Communism". Truman also wanted to have US government ambassador to WCC in Geneva. W. A. Visser't Hooft, *W. A. Visser't Hooft: Memories*, 225-227.

⁴⁷⁸ See, "Peace and the Reunification of Korea, Part One: Background", WCC Central Committee, Moscow, USSR, 16th-27th July 1989 Document No. 2.4.

In fact, Dulles was directly involved in the Korean War, and most academic writings on the subject emphasize his role in its outbreak.⁴⁷⁹ Some authors focus on his “mysterious” visit to Korea just before the war. P. Lowe pays an attention to his appearance at the 38th Parallel:

Dulles was shown wearing his characteristic Homburg hat, peering intently across the 38th Parallel at the Communist hordes to the north. This was regarded in Pyongyang as demonstrating Dulles’s aggressive intentions.⁴⁸⁰

B. Cumings, by contrast, focuses on the meeting between Dulles and Rhee on 19th June. After investigating US secret documents, he maintains that Dulles agreed to Rhee’s intention to march towards the North.⁴⁸¹ Cumings also indicates that Dulles was “a key advocate” of roll back.⁴⁸² J. Holliday claims, “During Dulles’s visit to Seoul Rhee not only pushed for a direct American defense but also advocated an attack on the North”.⁴⁸³ A North Korean source also insists that “Dulles delivered Truman’s order to Rhee to attack the North”.⁴⁸⁴

However, it is difficult to conclude what exactly Dulles did with Rhee during his visit to Korea, because the most important documents concerning the truth of the war still remain top secret in South Korea and the USA. It is also not the main purpose of this sub-chapter to examine how much Dulles was involved in the outbreak of the war. The important point to note is that the alteration of the WCC’s position on the Korean War from one of “negotiation” to that of supporting the “police action” was initiated and led by Dulles. It was surely “dangerous,” if not “mysterious,” that a politician so deeply and one-sidedly involved in the dispute was able to have so much influence over such a sensitive ecclesiastical agenda, within a world ecumenical body like the WCC.

⁴⁷⁹ E.g., Tae-ho Yoo, *The Korean War and The United Nations: A Legal and Diplomatic Historical Study*, 122-124; J. Halliday and B. Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, 64-67; Cumings’, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract*, 586-588; 601; 608-609; W. Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, 54-57; M. Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins*, vol. 2, 454-455; P. Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 183-186; H. Kim, *A Study of the Korean War and This-Worldly Blessings in the Christian Churches*, 69-71.

⁴⁸⁰ P. Lowe, *Op. Cit.*, 184.

⁴⁸¹ B. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 257-258.

⁴⁸² B. Cumings, *Ibid.*, 276.

⁴⁸³ J. Halliday and B. Cumings, *Op. Cit.*, 65.

⁴⁸⁴ H. Moon, *Mije eui Chosun Chimryak Jungchak eui Jungchae wa Naeran Dobal eui Jinsang eul Pokroham*, (The Nature of American Imperialist Invasion Policy to Korea and Truth on the Outbreak of Civil War: A Disclosure), Pyongyang, Joongang Tongsin, 1950, 75-76. N.B., Hak-bong Moon, the Special Advisor of Intelligence Department of USAMGIK and Political Advisor of Rhee, wrote this book in June, just after Dulles’s visit.

2.3.3 Controversial Responses

The Toronto statement also brought serious ecclesiastical tension within the WCC. In fact, such tension predicted immediately the statement came out because of its completely one-side view of the issue. At Toronto, there had been no opportunity for the churches from the Communist countries to deliver their opinion of the war.

The American churches were among the strongest supporters of the WCC statement. The Federal Council of Churches (FCC) had announced appreciation of the “swift action of UN” on 6th July 1950,⁴⁸⁵ and announced a statement of its own which strongly supported the police action.⁴⁸⁶ On 19th September, the Executive Committee reiterated its support for the UN action:

In Korea, the United Nations was confronted with the severest challenge to its authority and usefulness. A people...bloodshed by an act of aggression. We are heartened by the swift action of the United Nations in resisting this aggression. We are gratified that the forces combating invasion in South Korea serve under the flag and command of United Nations...At this moment in history the United Nations offers promise that mankind, if it has the will to do so, can repel aggressions and advance the cause of peace and justice through the collective endeavor of the world community.⁴⁸⁷

This is a somewhat naïve understanding of the nature of Korean War, because the origin of the war was not clear and the bloodshed was mostly caused by US operational mistakes. It is possible that Dulles had a hand in this statement too, because he was the Chairperson of the FCC’s Department of International Justice and Goodwill. It was this Department that delivered the statement to the UN on 21st September.⁴⁸⁸

The American churches supported the war, but significant individual Christians opposed it, and criticized the UN’s position. For instance, the members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation⁴⁸⁹ claimed that the UN must cease the police action in Korea, which brought enormous non-combatant and civilian casualties, and must mediate between the two Koreas

⁴⁸⁵ See, *New York Times*, 7th July 1950.

⁴⁸⁶ See, “A Message for Order Day”, *Federal Council Bulletin*, October 1950, 18.

⁴⁸⁷ “Statement”, Federal Council of Churches, 19th September 1950.

⁴⁸⁸ “From R. Fagley to W. R. Austin”, 21st September 1950. Fagley was executive secretary of the Department.

⁴⁸⁹ The Fellowship of Reconciliation was founded as an interdenominational and international religious pacifist organization on the eve of the World War I, and established in the US in 1915. It continues today as an interfaith activist force for peace. For details, see, www.forusa.org.

to establish a cease-fire.⁴⁹⁰ Furthermore, the Fellowship claimed that what was happening was not “police action”, but war between the superpowers.⁴⁹¹ According to *The Witness* and *The Churchman*, on 21st August 1950, 469 individual pastors from 27 denominations in the USA signed a statement, which asked for “a solution of the Korean conflict through negotiation and mediation,” against the support given by the WCC and the FCC to the police action.⁴⁹² There were also some personal criticisms of the WCC statement. For example, K. Leslie stated that the WCC had lost its “prophetic voice” by supporting US imperialism, at the instigation of Dulles.⁴⁹³ Interestingly, some Korean pastors in the US also appealed to American Christians, pointing out that the “US intervention is unjust because the war is a civil war”.⁴⁹⁴

In other Western churches, the United Church of Canada and the WCC Group in Australia also emphasized the necessity for the WCC to be involved in efforts for reconciliation, instead of supporting military measures in Korea.⁴⁹⁵ However, most mainline Western churches supported the Statement by voting its approval at Toronto.

As soon as the WCC announced the Statement, the churches in the Communist countries bitterly criticized the WCC’s support for the police action in Korea. Bishop A. Bereczky, the President of the Reformed Church of Hungary and the Ecumenical Committee of the Hungarian Churches, who had not been permitted to enter to Canada, as Hromádka was not, sent an open letter to the General Secretary of WCC. Here is a quotation from his criticism of the Statement:

The second point states that an armed aggression has taken place, and accepts the witness of the Commission on Korea in the UN as the one deserving most confidence as an unbiased and objective statement. You warned the World Council of Churches against entering the political arena, and now the Central Committee accepts the witness of a political actor as an objective and unbiased statement of fact, while implicitly rejecting the position of the other contending party. Why? The third point commends the UN “for its prompt decision to meet this aggression and for authorizing a police measure...” Then you add the pious wish that “at the same time, governments must press individually and through the UN for a just settlement by negotiation and reconciliation.” How?... If your appeal is addressed to all governments, which governments will actually press individually and through the UN for a just

⁴⁹⁰ “Action on Korea Draws Few Protests”, *Fellowship*, September 1950, 19.

⁴⁹¹ A. Hassler, “Cops in Korea”, *Fellowship*, September 1950, 4-8.

⁴⁹² *The Witness*, 27th July 1950; *The Churchman*, September 1950, 23.

⁴⁹³ K. Leslie, “Common Sense Concerning Korea”, *The Protestant*, July-August-September 1950, 3-26.

⁴⁹⁴ “Appeal to American Christians”, *Korea Independence*, 19th July 1950.

⁴⁹⁵ See, “Calls for Reconciliation in Korea”, *Ecumenical Press Service*, 20th October 1950; E. H. Burgmann, “World Council Group Wants China in UN”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 11, 1951, 32.

settlement? Don't you think that a vague wish like that will but further aggravate the discredit of Christianity?⁴⁹⁶

Berecsky's criticism was focused on the credibility and objectivity of the UNCOK report on the Korean War, on which the WCC relied. He also pointed to illogicality of the Statement in supporting the police action and, at the same time, expecting peaceful solution. Bishop J. Peter of the Hungarian Reformed Church also criticized the WCC resolution, claiming that it supported the real aggressors in Korea.⁴⁹⁷ In addition to these criticisms, the Hungarian Protestant Churches issued a joint statement on the National Protestant Day to the effect that "the unrighteous and cruel wars in Vietnam and Korea clearly unmask those, who, even at this horrible price, are bent on defending their privileges".⁴⁹⁸ The Hungarian Churches also asked why the WCC had not said anything about the atrocities committed by South Korea.⁴⁹⁹

It was also a jolt for the WCC to hear the response of the Slovakian church from Rev. Matasik, General Secretary of the Reformed Church of Slovakia:

The World Council of Churches was created...with the purpose of enabling all Christian churches which became its members to help one another as much as possible in a brotherly way, spiritually as well as materially, and strengthen the consciousness of solidarity and brotherhood among all the Christians of the world...In case we should find out that the World Council of Churches should be an open or a masked tool of the old dying society, we shall be the first ones to leave the World Council of Churches. Because we want this Assembly of Churches to be an Assembly of mutual respect, love and mutual help, any kind of making ill use of this institution, which in its essence is so beneficial, should be frustrated.⁵⁰⁰

Here Matasik questioned not only the Statement but also the decision making process of the WCC. He warned that his church was considering withdrawing its membership of the WCC because it had excluded the voice of the churches in Eastern Europe from participating in such an important decision.

⁴⁹⁶ "From Breckzy to Visser't Hooft", 9th August 1950; This letter was published in *Hungarian Church Press*, 9th August 1950; *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 16th October 1950, 136.

⁴⁹⁷ "Bishop Peter at World Peace Council", *The Protestant*, April-May-June 1951, 6.

⁴⁹⁸ "A Message of the Hungarian Protestant Churches to Christian Brethren Abroad and to the World Council of Churches", *The Hungarian Church Press*, 1/15 November 1950.

⁴⁹⁹ "The Message of the Hungarian Protestant Press Conference to the Church Press in Other Land", *Ibid.* "I know of course that there is a real difference between unprovoked aggression and the kind of atrocities of which the South Korean army is guilty." "From Visser't Hooft to Nolde", 6th November 1950.

⁵⁰⁰ "Extract from Address by Rev. Mr. Matasik, General Secretary of the Reformed Church of Slovakia", 28th July 1950. WCC Archival No. 301.437.1/1.

In Asia, the Chinese Church also bitterly criticized the statement. As we have noted, T. C. Chao⁵⁰¹ had a doubt about on the role of Dulles in the matter. From 16th-21st April 1951, 151 representatives of Protestant churches and organizations assembled in Peking, having been called there by the Commission on Cultural and Educational Affairs of the Political Administration of the Central People's Government.⁵⁰² In this gathering, the representatives made a statement in relation to the Toronto Statement as follows:

The majority of Christians in the world are conscientious, but imperialism consistently utilizes Christianity as its instrument of aggression. In July 1950, the Central Committee of World Council of Churches at its meeting in Canada passed a resolution on the war in Korea and falsely accused the People's Democratic Republic of Korea as having started the war and petitioned the United Nations to authorize its member nations to support its "police action" in Korea...The accent of this resolution was that of the United States State Department. The person who was actually directing the World Council of Churches to pass this resolution was no other than Dulles, the tool of American Wall Street and an instigator of the war in Korea. We raise our serious protest to this resolution of the World Council of Churches.⁵⁰³

A week later, on 28th April, T. C. Chao resigned his presidency of the WCC to express his protest against the Toronto Statement and against the WCC's position on the Korean War.⁵⁰⁴

In July last year the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches issued a statement condemning North Korea as aggressor...I am one of the Presidents of the World Council on the one side and a loyal citizen of the Republic of the Chinese people on the other. Only recently I came to realize how impossible my position was. As a patriotic Chinese I must protest against the Toronto message, which sounds so much like the voice of Wall Street...I can no longer be one of the Presidents of the

⁵⁰¹ Concerning his theology in Communist China, see, "Christian Churches in Communist China", manuscript, 2nd Feb. 1949, WCC Archival No. 301. 51. 2/4; "Revolution in China", 1949, WCC Archival No. 301. 51. 2/4; "Days of Rejoicing in China", *Christian Century*, Jan. 1949, copied from WCC Archival No. 301. 51. 2/4; "The Struggles for a True Church in China", *Truth and Life*, summer 1950, copied from WCC Archival No. 301. 51. 2/2; See also, E. Tang, "The Cosmic Christ-The Search for a Chinese Theology", *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 1.2, 1995, 131-142. Concerning the bibliography of his writings in Chinese, See, Yang, Chou Hwāi, "趙紫宸先生主要著作目錄", (Bibliography of the Writings of T. C. Chao), in 趙紫宸先生百年誕辰紀念, Beijing, The CPCCC Beijing Committee, 1981, 5-12.

⁵⁰² Before this meeting, in the autumn of 1950, more than 1,527 Chinese Christians from various denominations including T. C. Chao, Y. T. Wu signed a manifesto warning against imperialism especially US imperialism in the Korean War. See, "Chinese Christians Sign 'Anti-Imperialism' Manifesto", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. X, 1950, 151-152.

⁵⁰³ "A Joint Statement from the Representatives of Protestant Churches and Organizations of China", 21st April 1951.

⁵⁰⁴ See, "Letter from Dr. T. C. Chao", *Minutes and Reports of the Forth Meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches*, Rolle, 4-11 August 1951, 55. N.B., In spite of this resignation, Chao was accused and lost his professorship by the "3 antis (waste, corruption, bureaucracy) movement", which was led by Communists of the Yenching University. Philip Lew Wooy, "Confidential Memo for Dr. Visser't Hooft", 1952; see also, "Chinese Communists Amplify Charges Against T. C. Chao", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 12, 1952, 150.

World Council. Therefore, I resign from the office and request that my name be deleted from all committees of the Council.⁵⁰⁵

The sincerity of Chao's resignation was questioned. In a confidential memo, the WCC expressed the view that Chao had come under pressure from the Communists to resign his post.⁵⁰⁶ However, whether the Communists forced his resignation, or whether he genuinely wished to do so, it was still true that he really did oppose the WCC's position on the Korean War. Even before the resignation, he had openly criticized the statement. The Executive Committee of the WCC finally accepted his resignation at its meeting in Rolle on 10th August 1951.⁵⁰⁷ In relation to this decision, K. H. Ting criticized the WCC for having little concern to listen to the voices from churches in the Communist countries. Their view of the statement had been ignored. Ting also pointed out that the WCC had easily accepted Cho's resignation without further discussion, and had "not tried to protect him, not even a little".⁵⁰⁸ In Ting's view, if the WCC had accepted only a little part of Chao's criticism, it would not have been necessary for him to resign his post, and he could at the same time have been protected from any Communist attack.

The Chinese Church not only criticized the WCC but also organized "The Resist America and Help Korea Movement",⁵⁰⁹ which was led by Y. T. Wu.⁵¹⁰ To understand these strong actions of the Chinese church, it is necessary to remember that China had been directly involved in the Korean War since October 1950.

⁵⁰⁵ "From T. C. Chao to the Presidents of the World Council of Churches", 28th April 1951.

Concerning his resignation, see also, "T. C. Chao Resigns Presidency of World Council of Churches", *New China News Agency Daily Bulletin*, No. 322, 12th July 1951.

⁵⁰⁶ Confidential Memo, "T. C. Chao", 1951; see also, "Recent Developments in China, Strictly Confidential, Background Information", N0. 2, July 1951, WCC Archival No. 301. 51. 2/2.

⁵⁰⁷ "These Committees have instructed me to say that the World Council accepts your resignation.", "From Visser't Hooft to T. C. Chao", 10th August 1951.

⁵⁰⁸ Visser't Hooft, "Confidential, Notes on a Conversation with the Reverend Marcus James", 17th July 1954.

⁵⁰⁹ For the details of movement, see, Y. T. Wu, "A Summary of the Eight Months' Work of the Movement for the Protection of Self-Government, Self-Support, and Self-Propagation in Chinese Protestantism", Unpublished paper, April 1951.

⁵¹⁰ Concerning theology of Y. T. Wu, see, Y. T. Wu, "The Reformation of Christianity", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 9, 1950, 187-190; Y. T. Wu, "Unfolding the Banner of the Christian Reform Movement", *Collected Writings of TSPM in China* (in Chinese), Shanghai, TSPM/CCC Press, 1993, 5-19; China Christian Three Self Patriotic Movement Committee ed, *Selective Writings of TSPM* (in Chinese), Shanghai, TSPM, 1993, 5-35; 41-53; 68-82; 468-474; Far Eastern Office, Division of Foreign Missions, NCCCUSA compiled, "Y. T. Wu on the New Missionary Strategy", *Documents of the Three-Self Movement: Sources Materials for the Study of the Protestant Church in Communist China*, New York, NCCCUSA, 1963, 201-209; Z. M. Chen, "Y. T. Wu: A Prophetic Theologian", *Chinese Theological Review*, vol. 10, 148-158; K. H. Ting, "What Can We Learn from Y. T. Wu Today", *IBRM*, vol. 14, 1990, 158-161.

From the above research, we can conclude that not only the Korean churches but also world churches divided into two positions on the Korean War. The division followed very closely along the line which separated the East and the West.⁵¹¹ This division of churches throughout the world was caused by the Toronto Statement of the WCC, which supported the police action of the UN and the US in Korea.

3. "The Third Way"

3.1 Hromádka vs Niebuhr

The WCC, which was faced with serious criticism from the East on not only the statement but also the decision-making process, tried to justify its position. *The Ecumenical Review* published the Toronto Statement and justified it under the title of "What the Korean Resolution does, and does not, mean." Here is an extract:

Faced as we were with the fact that the only international legal authority which we have, had declared that an act of aggression had been committed, and deeply conscious of the fact that, however imperfect the United Nations is, breakdown would lead to complete international anarchy, we could not evade our responsibility for saying what we did say. Yes, it was necessary to take this action, so as to show that the Churches, though they are not of the world, are concerned with order in this world: that though they are not partisan, they cannot remain neutral when a basic principle of human relationships at stake.⁵¹²

O. F. Nolde, the CCIA Director, also justified the statement on the grounds that it was based upon the report of the neutral international commission on the origin of the war, and emphasized that the statement was adopted by the Central Committee.⁵¹³ However, these justifications were not sufficient to persuade the churches in the East, who questioned the credibility of the report on account of the fact that it had been adopted in their absence.

Therefore, WCC openly argued the issue in another volume of *The Ecumenical Review*, vol.3,

⁵¹¹ N.B., In this thesis, "East and West" means the Communist and the capitalist blocs during the cold-war period.

⁵¹² "What the Korean Resolution Does, and Does Not, Mean", *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 3, No.1, 1950, 78.

⁵¹³ "From E. P. Eastman to B. Asbeck, O. F. Nolde, K. G. Grubb, W. A. Visser't Hooft and C. W. Ranson", 22nd November 1950: see also, O. F. Nolde, "The Christian Witness to the World of Nations", *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 4, 1952, 378-384.

No.2, 1951, which was entirely devoted to the Toronto Statement. K. Grubb, the chairperson of the CCIA, maintained that the WCC must listen to the criticisms from the East because “the first job of the Council is to maintain its own fellowship”.⁵¹⁴ He insisted that the WCC should not directly quote the UNCOK’s report because it had not been written from a Christian perspective.⁵¹⁵

M. M. Thomas questioned about what was meant by world order, which the WCC had emphasized in its statement, i.e. world order for what and for whom. He pointed out that the notion of “the international order and rule does not elicit the same reverence in Asia as (it) does in western Christians”.⁵¹⁶ For him, it was not just the question of who started the Korean War that was the important issue, but also where social justice lay.

J. Garret also argued that in Asia, the WCC should not be linked with the names of Bao Dai and Syngman Rhee, who led anti-Communist tyrannies. Instead, it should listen voices from China, because Communism in Asia had been accepted as a mean of social “righteousness” and national liberation.⁵¹⁷

However, it was J. Hromádka, who thoroughly criticized the statement as a theologian. Hromádka sent a letter to visser’t Hooft on 30th November,⁵¹⁸ pointing out that the WCC

⁵¹⁴ K. Grubb, “The Responsibility of the Churches in Politics”, *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 3, No.2, 1951, 115.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵¹⁶ M. M. Thomas, “The Churches in the Political Struggles of Our Day”, *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 3, No.2, 1951, 125.

⁵¹⁷ J. Garrett, “The Words and Deeds of the Churches” *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 3, No.2, 1951, 130.

⁵¹⁸ See, Appendix E. In addition to this letter, Concerning Hromádka’s criticisms on the Toronto Statement, see, J. Hromádka, “We Are Responsible for Peace”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 1951, 190-191; “A Voice from the Other Side”, *Ibid.*, vol. 11, 1951, 27-30; “Social and Cultural Factors in Our Divisions”, vol. 5, *The Ecumenical Review*, 1952, 52-58; “Speech Delivered by the Great Czechoslovakian Theologian Pastor Hromádka at the World Council of Peace”. *Le Bulletin du Conseil Mondial de la Paix*, No. 1.S. April 1951, 1-2; J. Smolik, “Josef Lukl Hromádka”, *Christian Existence in Dialogue: Doing Theology in All Seasons*, Geneva, WCC, 1990, 7-10; M. Opocensky, “Postscript”, M. Opocensky ed., *Josef L. Hromádka, The Field is the World: Selected Writings from the Years 1918-1968*, Prague, CPC, 1990, 469-476; Concerning Hromádka’s life and thought, see also, J. Hromádka, *Evangelium Für Atheisten*, Berlin, Alle Rechte beim Käthe Vogt Verlag, 1960; J. Hromádka, *Thoughts of a Czech Pastor*, tr. by M. Page and B. Page, London, SCM Press, 1970; M. Salajka, *Our Time: From the Ecumenical Legacy of J. L. Hromádka*, tr. by P. Macek, Praha, Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Socialist Republic, 1978; CPC ed., *Challenges of Remembering: To the Honor of J. L. Hromádka*, Praha, CPC, 1998;

supported the action of a secular power too simply, without deep reflection on the contemporary situation:

Today, when the peace of the world is at stake, and every self-righteous word can strengthen the aggressive and destructive forces in one's own nation, and prompt a catastrophe, the World Council of Churches should speak in a way that does not pour oil into the fire, and does not encourage one side to a self-righteous "Crusade".⁵¹⁹

Secondly, he worried that the WCC had become "an instrument of one international power-group" by supporting the police action in Korea:

It is difficult to understand how a finding of the Korea commission which represents just one power-group within UNO could have been taken as a ground and justification of such a far-reaching statement. We are really disturbed by the fact that, in one of the most decisive and tragic moments of world history, the World Council of Churches identified itself, self-assuredly, with one side. Instead of challenging the responsibility of all statesmen it condemned, in an out-spoken and specific way, one of the two groups.⁵²⁰

What Hromádka said here can be interpreted as continuing the line he had taken answering the speech by Dulles at Amsterdam in 1948. "The ecumenical movement cannot be identified with one political position if it wants to remain credible".⁵²¹ He saw the problem of Korea as closely connected with the tension between East and West.

Thirdly, Hromádka also drew attention to economic factors, which played a great part in the Korean War:

It was also essential to lay a finger upon the fact that economic expansion tends always, sooner or later, tangibly or intangibly, to military aggression. The church groups are apt to overlook it since the economic expansion does not look, at first sight, as dangerous as a direct political and military domination.⁵²²

Hromádka also thought the Toronto Statement had been a frightful handicap to Christian churches. The direct result of it was the resignation of Chao, and withdrawal of Chinese member churches from active membership in the WCC. Contact with the Christians in North

⁵¹⁹ "From Hromádka to Visser't Hooft", 30th November 1950, 1-2. Hromádka also wrote a letter to the Chairman of Security Council. "I cannot understand the fact that the Security Council submitted to the American request for 'police action' against Northern Korea with all the raids and destroying of the lives of civilian population". "Dr. Hromádka on American Aggression in Korea", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 1950, 160.

⁵²⁰ "From Hromádka to Visser't Hooft", 30th November 1950, 2, WCC Archival No. 301. 437. 1/5.

⁵²¹ For the detail of the argument between Dulles and Hromádka, See, J. F. Dulles, "The Christian Citizen in a Changing World", WCC ed., *The Church and the International Disorder*, London, SCM Press, 1948, 73-114; J. L. Hromádka, "Our Responsibility in the Post-War World", *Ibid.*, 114-142.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 3.

Korea was also lost.

Hromádka promoted a theology of dialogue with atheism, and this was one of the motives of his response. He sought to make a bridge between Christianity and atheism through dialogue because he believed the Gospel seeks to embrace the whole of humankind. This meant that “no one should be excluded from dialogue.”⁵²³ He tried to interpret atheism to Christians as the judgment of history on their lack of moral and social sensitivity to the suffering of human beings.⁵²⁴ Hromádka was unable to accept the Toronto Statement because it ignored the necessity of a dialogue with the Communists in North Korea.

Visser’t Hooft responded to Hromádka’s criticisms in his letter on 21st December 1950, as follows:

The main objection, which you raise against the resolution is that it identifies the World Council with one group of powers. I can say immediately that this was not the intention of the resolution. For what the Central Committee had in mind was to say aggression is wrong whoever commits it and from wherever it comes. If I may put in a personal word, I took a public stand against military action (police action).⁵²⁵

Visser’t Hooft personally had little confidence about the police action. Later, he recognized that “in that resolution we had failed to show, in line with whole tradition of the ecumenical movement, the struggle against the easy conscience of the West”.⁵²⁶

However, in the context of the early 1950s, Hromádka was blamed as a “Red Stooge” or “Agent of Moscow”.⁵²⁷ H. S. Leiper blamed the criticisms of the Toronto statement from the churches in the East, including Hromádka’s, as being forced by the Communists.⁵²⁸

It was Reinhold Niebuhr who bitterly criticized Hromádka and strongly defended the statement.⁵²⁹ It was natural for Niebuhr to do so because he had involved in formulating the

⁵²³ J. Smolik, *Op. Cit.*, 9.

⁵²⁴ See, J. Hromádka, “The Significance of Socialist Atheism”, M. Opocensky ed., *Op. Cit.*, 310-316.

⁵²⁵ “From Visser’t Hooft to J. L. Hromádka”, 21st December 1950. 301. 437. 1/5.

⁵²⁶ W. A. Visser’t Hooft, *W. A. Visser’t Hooft: Memories*, London, SCM Press, 1973, 221-222.

⁵²⁷ R. T. Hitt, “Hromádka: Red Stooge or Saint”, *Eternity*, September 1954, WCC Archival No. 301. 437. 1/1.

⁵²⁸ H. S. Leiper, “Christian Honesty in Communist Land”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 1951, 185-186.

⁵²⁹ Concerning Niebuhr’s thought on the Korean War in relation to his anti-Communism, see, “The World Council and the Peace Issue”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 1950, 107-108; “Editorial Notes”, *Ibid.*, 130; “Editorial Notes”, *Ibid.*, 170; “Ten Fateful Years”, *Ibid.*, vol. 11, 1951, 1-4; “The

statement in the front place. Here is Niebuhr's assessment of Hromádka and the ecumenical leaders from the East:

There are not many Christians who are prompted by purely Marxist ideology, though there are men like Y. T. Wu in China, who have been pretty pure Marxist long before the Communists came to power. But there are many Christians, particularly in Asia, who know little of one of the most tragic facts of contemporary history, which is that an alternative to some form of historic injustice may turn out to be more grievous than the system which it challenges. Failure to recognize this fact has undoubtedly greatly influenced the thought of men like Dr. Hromádka in Czechoslovakia.⁵³⁰

Hromádka had argued in detail about the statement, but Niebuhr only criticized him in a general way, and portrayed him as a simple-minded or naïve theologian. In contrast to Hromádka, Niebuhr evaluated the statement as a remarkable one:

The two most important emphases in the document are: (1) the commendation of the action of the United Nations, as an instrument of world order in resisting the aggression in Korea; and (2) the insistence that this conflict need not be the beginning of another world war if both the military pressures of totalitarianism are resisted and the injustice and disorders, which Communism exploits, are corrected... The question is not how to appease Communism but, in the words of the World Council, to achieve enough justice to render the world morally impregnable to totalitarian infiltration.⁵³¹

Here, Niebuhr understands Communism as totalitarianism. Therefore, for him, it is impossible to sit together with the Communists for a dialogue. He also justifies a US military intervention in the life of a nation experiencing Communist infiltration.

In fact, Niebuhr had once been a pacifist and a Christian socialist.⁵³² However, he changed his view after 1940 and argued for what he called "Christian realism".⁵³³ J. P. Wogaman describes this Christian realism: "To Niebuhr, moral judgment is sorting out the most realistic means to attain the most defensible proximate - without pre-commitment to some means as inherently more moral than others."⁵³⁴ Niebuhr tried to suggest a realistic re-evaluation of

Two Dimensions of the Struggle", *Ibid.*, 65-66; "The Peril of War and the Prospects of Peace", *Ibid.*, 129-130.

⁵³⁰ R. Niebuhr, "The Captive Churches", *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 1950, 146.

⁵³¹ R. Niebuhr, "The World Council and the Peace Issue", *Ibid.*, 107-108.

⁵³² N.B., He was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. However, he withdrew its membership later. Concerning his ethics before 1940, see, R. Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931; *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935.

⁵³³ Concerning his Christian realism, see, R. Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics*, 1952; *Christian Realism and political Problem*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

⁵³⁴ J. P. Wogaman, *A Christian Method of Moral Judgment*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1976,

human moral capacity. In doing this, he believed that human beings could devise realizable ethical standards for themselves.

In his realistic and pragmatic view of ethics, the pacifists as well as Hormadka were seen as naïve in relation to the Korean War. Against those who were trying to find a “Christian solution” to the Korean War, which meant reconciliation and mediation, Niebuhr insisted that the solution would have to be political to be realistic. Here is part of his interview with *The Christian Century*:

What can Christians contribute to peace in Korea?

I do not think that a Christian who is not a pacifist can possibly advance a particularly Christian solution for the Korean conflict. It is a part of our total struggle with world Communism, and I do not think there are particularly Christian insights for the strategic problems involved. There are large issues for which Christian faith is relevant. But it could be pretentious to offer a “Christian” solution for the special problem of Korea.⁵³⁵

In this interview, Niebuhr stated his conviction that although Christian resources could be utilized for peace in Korea, Christians should be honest and realistic about Christianity itself. Trying to offer a “Christian solution” for the special problem of Korea would be a pretentious. The solution for Korea should be a political and economic solution rather than a Christian one.⁵³⁶ From this ethical and theological standpoints, he supported the police action as a practical and realistic means for achieving the desired result. Unlike Hromádka, he was an advocate of military measures.

Niebuhr also believed that “in Asia there is little historic, social or economic basis for the democratic society we are defending”. “Colonial peoples, whether still under tutelage or recently emancipated, have not achieved social or political stability”.⁵³⁷ Therefore, “a great deal of moral and political imagination and courage will be required if we are to prevent Asia from sinking into Communism”.⁵³⁸ For him, it was America which had the moral power to establish an international order. He used this idea to justify the US intervention in the Korean War.⁵³⁹ However, the problem of his ethic of intervention was that it left unanswered questions about who would judge a particular situation, and what kind of morality might be

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⁵³⁵ Editorial, “No Christian Peace in Korea?”, *The Christian Century*, 4th February 1953, 126.

⁵³⁶ See, R. Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power politics*, 9.

⁵³⁷ R. Niebuhr, “Editorial Notes”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 10, 1950, 130.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁹ See, R. Niebuhr, “Ten Fateful Years”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 11, 1951, 1-4.

necessary in Asia? Niebuhr seems to have thought that the USA should be the judge and caretaker of Korea. Both Niebuhr and Dulles shared exactly the same logic. Both had participated in the Oxford Conference in 1937, and they became good friends, sharing the same utilitarian view of the role of the churches in the international order. Through his connection to Dulles, Niebuhr became the Special Advisor to the US State Department, and had a “considerable influence” on US diplomatic policy.⁵⁴⁰

However, Hromádka responded that the USA and its allies merely formed “one group of great power”, and its policies should not be seen as an international moral crusade. The police action was “aggressive imperialism of a police state” which was “seeking world domination”⁵⁴¹ Therefore, for him, the Toronto Statement supporting the police action was irrelevant and inadmissible as a statement of the world churches.

3.2 Barth and “The Third Way”

When the churches and theologians were in ideological confrontation between East and West because of the Toronto Statement, K. Barth argued for what he called “the third way,” urging them to escape from a black and white logic.⁵⁴² Nevertheless, he did not ignore the necessities of the kind of dialogue that people like Hromádka advocated. Rather, he called the churches to show their Christian identity by promoting reconciliation in the Cold War context.⁵⁴³

K. Barth’s quest for the Third Way started when he had joined the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SSPD) in 1915. He gave an address at that time which highlighted the link between Christianity and socialism:

Jesus is a movement for social justice, and the movement for social justice is Jesus in the present...Real socialism is real Christianity in our time...A real Christian must

⁵⁴⁰ See, A. J. van der Bent, “Reinhold Niebuhr”, *Ecumenical Dictionary*, 729.

⁵⁴¹ J. Hromádka, “A Voice from the Other Side”, *Christianity and Crisis*, vol. 11, 1951, 28.

⁵⁴² Concerning “the third way”, see, K. Barth, *Against the Stream: Shorter Post-war Writings, 1946-52*, London, SCM Press, 1954; K. Barth and J. Hamel, *How to Serve God in a Marxist Land*, New York, Association Press, 1959; K. Barth, *How I Changed My Mind*, Richmond, John Knox Press, 1966; E. Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, London, SCM Press, 1976, 332-400; S. Park, *National Reunification and Christianity*, Seoul, Hankilsa, 1986, 26-52.

⁵⁴³ E. Busch notes that K. Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation developed between the firing lines by arguing for a ‘third way between East and West’. E. Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, 381.

become a socialist if he is in earnest about the reformation of Christianity. A real socialist must be a Christian if he is earnest about the reformation of socialism.⁵⁴⁴

Often researchers describe Barth, at this time, as a Christian Socialist. However, according to F. Marquardt, one of the purposes of his joining the SSPD was to point out the problems of such a identification.⁵⁴⁵ When we read this quotation, it is important to bear in mind the last sentence. Indeed, the young Barth sought to be both a good Christian and a good socialist.⁵⁴⁶

Although Barth had no “inclination toward Eastern Communism”,⁵⁴⁷ he considered anti-Communism to be even worse than Communism.⁵⁴⁸ He distinguished between Communists and Communism:

Anti means *against*. God is not against, but *for* man. The Communists are man too. God is also for the Communists. So Christian cannot be against the Communists but only for them. To be for the Communists does not mean to be for Communism. I am not for Communism. But one can only say what has to be said *against* Communism if one is *for* the Communists.⁵⁴⁹

Barth thus had a humanistic approach toward the Communists. Hence, although Barth was not a Communist, he was not an anti-Communist either. He warns that if a religion overemphasizes an “anti” stance against one ideology, it could fall into becoming another ideology, or a form of extremism. It seems that it is too narrow to capture Barth in any one of the two sides. Rather, Barth sought to understand the Communists. He thought that Communism was the result of “inhuman” Western capitalism. The reason behind the spread of Communism was a concern for the salvation, or at least the well-being of exploited labors. The West, however, considered the Communists to be the “absolute enemy.” In this extreme anti-Communism, Barth saw another “Hitler in us”.⁵⁵⁰

Finally, when the confrontation between East and West was at its height, over the Korean War, Barth begged Western philosophy, political ethics and theology to come out of its ideological

⁵⁴⁴ Cited from J. Bently, *Between Marx and Christ: The Dialogue in German-Speaking Europe, 1870-1970*, London, NLB, 1982, 18.

⁵⁴⁵ See, F. Marquardt, “Sozialismus bei Karl Barth”, *Junge Kirche*, vol. 33, No. 1, 1972, 6.

⁵⁴⁶ Concerning Barth’s theology and socialism, see, F. Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus: Das Beispiel Karl Barths*, München, Kaiser, 1985.

⁵⁴⁷ K. Barth, *How I Changed My Mind*, Richmond, John Knox Press, 1966, 62.

⁵⁴⁸ “I believe anti-Communism as a matter of principle to be an even greater evil than Communism itself”. *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁴⁹ “From K. Barth to T. Schnyder” 8th June 1958; cited from, E. Busch, *Op. Cit.*, 383.

⁵⁵⁰ K. Barth, *How I Changed My Mind*, 63.

“madness”. Furthermore, he suggested a new direction for the relationship between the East and the West:

I think that the West, which should know better, must seek and find a better approach to the necessary confrontation with the power and ideology of the Communist East. Possibilities of a worthy, circumspect, and firmly guided policy of co-existence and neutrality were more than once offered to the West in past years. More honor would have accrued to the name of “free world” had it take up these possibilities; also, more useful and more promising results would have been achieved than those which stand before us today.⁵⁵¹

In the whirlpool of the Cold War, Barth maintained a prophetic voice of “co-existence”. He also developed this idea in relation to the role of the churches in the Cold War context. He asked the churches not to identify uncritically with one of the two sides because “the present conflict of East and West” is “the world-political struggle for power”.⁵⁵² He warned that by being too close to any one of them, the churches would end up justifying a secular power which wanted to dominate the whole world.⁵⁵³ He also asked the churches to transcend the “natural history of the world” i.e. the history of power struggle and ideological conflict, and to live in “the Kingdom of God and the Glory of Jesus Christ.” He also suggested to the Christians: “What we can do in the midst of the conflict can only consist in the wholehearted, sincere and helpful sympathy which we are in duty bound to extend to all its victims as far as lies within our power.”⁵⁵⁴ Barth’s claim was neither a passive response nor “Christian disillusionment” in regard to the Cold War conflict. Rather, he claimed for the churches a more active and fundamental involvement in the conflict. This was what he meant by the Christian churches adopting “the third way” between East and West.⁵⁵⁵

Barth did not give detailed accounts about the third way, but he did concentrate on developing the Doctrine of Reconciliation, especially after 1951. E. Busch shows the link between the Third Way and the Doctrine of Reconciliation.⁵⁵⁶ In the *Church Dogmatics IV*, Barth studied everything “from Christology to ecclesiology together with relevant ethics” in the Cold War context.⁵⁵⁷ He, especially, emphasizes “reconciliation” as the task of “the people of God in

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid*, 64-45.

⁵⁵² K. Barth, *Against the Stream*, 128.

⁵⁵³ “Not to take part in the conflict. As Christians it is not our concern at all.”, *Ibid.*, 131.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 130-131. See also, K. Barth, *Church and State*, tr. by G. R. Howe, London, SCM Press, 1939. C.f. Niebuhr’s thought on church and state, which claimed moral superiority of the USA.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 132.

⁵⁵⁶ E. Busch, *Op. Cit.*, 381-383.

⁵⁵⁷ E. Busch, *Ibid.*, 377.

world-occurrence” and “the ministry of the Christian community.”⁵⁵⁸ Reconciliation ought to be the third way of the churches in the Cold War context, according to Barth.

However, Niebuhr criticized Barth claiming he “refuses to make discriminating judgments about good and evil if the devil shows only one horn or half of a cloven foot”.⁵⁵⁹ E. Brunner, who often counter-argued against Barth on many aspects of theology, also asked again and again why he was so uncritical of Communism, by saying:

I imagined you would undergo the same change of outlook as Reinhold Niebuhr, who only two years ago was expressing doubts about my fundamental rejection of Communist totalitarianism at an important ecumenical conference, but who has since joined the absolute opponents of Communism, particularly since seeing the monster at close quarters in Berlin. What I cannot understand (about) you - is why a similar change has not occurred in your attitude...⁵⁶⁰

These criticisms of Niebuhr and Brunner were based on something of a misunderstanding of Barth’s third way. During the Korean War, many theologians in Korea and the Western world were fed on the most vigorous kind of anti-Communism, and tended to feel that the gospel could not be proclaimed in a Marxist world. But Barth knew that the whole world comprises the land in which the gospel can and should be cultivated.

From the above study, we can conclude that Barth argued “the third way” as an authentic identity for Christian churches in the Cold War context. This “third way” was not ignoring historical context or suffering people. Rather it promoted active witnessing through the ministry of reconciliation. Indeed, it was a prophetic voice, which called for the churches to move beyond the ideological struggles, and not be held captive by them. His notion of the third way is highly significant for the Korean churches, which experienced an extreme ideological division and confrontation during the Korean War.

⁵⁵⁸ See, K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV. 3. ii, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1961, §72.

⁵⁵⁹ *The Christian Century*, 27th October 1948, 1139. N.B., Barth answered, “God has not called us to be his lawyers”. *The Christian Century*, 16th February 1949; cited from J. C. Cort, *Christian Socialism: An Informal History*, New York, Orbis Books, 1988, 209-210. N.B., Rather, Niebuhr changed his claim Concerning the moral superiority of America after the bloodshed caused by America in the Vietnam War.

⁵⁶⁰ E. Brunner, “An Open Letter to Karl Barth”, in K. Barth, *Against the Stream*, 106.

3.3 The Implications

It is now necessary to summarize the implications and conclusions of this chapter. From our study on the position of the WCC on the Korean War, we can conclude that not only the Korean churches but also the world churches were divided into two ideological options. In general, pro-capitalistic, pro-American and pro-South Korean voice of the Western churches dominated in issuing the WCC Toronto Statement, which supported the “police action.” In this statement, the voice from the churches in North Korea and the Communist countries was ignored. By doing this, the statement caused a serious ecclesiastical tension to arise, which continued in the theological debate that followed between churches in East and West. Hromádka opposed the statement and emphasized the necessity of dialogue with atheists. On the other hand, Niebuhr supported the police action in order to preserve the international order and punish the invader, North Korea, based on his ethic of Christian realism. However, Barth called for the churches to come out of Cold War ideologies and to keep their specific Christian identity, emphasizing the promotion of reconciliation as a third way in the Cold War context.

We also noted that the majority of Christians in the North supported the South and the USA during the war. Because of this, the Communists increased their hostility towards the northern Christians. The support given to the South was one of the main causes of the persecution of Christians in North Korea during the war. It seems at first sight that the renewal of Protestant Christianity by the NKCA had been successful in the North before the war. However, it was proved that this renewal in fact resulted in failure because the majority of the Christians from the North eventually chose to relocate to the South. Finally, the Christians remained in the North became isolated in the Communist society after the war. We will study this isolation in more detail in next chapter. For the Communists in the North, the anti-Communism of the Korean churches and the Toronto Statement were excellent reference points to use as tools for criticizing Christianity as an anti-revolutionary and imperialistic religion.

In this context, the theological arguments and disputes which arose from the Toronto Statement had several implications for the Korean churches. Firstly, there is the significance of theological argument itself. We concluded that the renewal before the war and the support offered to the state by the NKCA during the war were not backed up by any proper theological reflection. Because of this, the NKCA failed to conduce grassroots Christians of

their renewal ethos. However, the theological controversies and arguments that followed the Toronto Statement enriched the ecumenical social thought of the WCC. Therefore, theologizing and the development of a grassroots approach to the renewal were future tasks which still awaited the NKCA. Only when they fulfilled these tasks would they be able to launch a renewal that would be authentic.

We also indicated the need for the southern churches to listen to Barth's criticism of anti-Communism in the post-war context. So far, we have seen that anti-Communism was dominant ideology among the Korean Christians. However, as Barth warned, anti-Communism is not Christian faith. Rather, reconciliation is a core of Christian faith, a fact that was especially relevant to the Korean context.

Lastly, the WCC debate, and the mistakes that were made, already indicated some of the ways in which both the Korean and the world churches would have to approach the issue of the reunification of Korea. When there were two Koreas both fighting to reunify the peninsula by force, and churches around the world supported one side or the other, the results were disastrous. It became evident that neither reconciliation nor an authentic reunification could be achieved in this way.

Chapter V

The Winter of Christianity in North Korea, 1954-1972

In this chapter, we will examine how northern Protestantism's ideological struggle with Communism before and during the Korean War affected the northern churches in the post-war context in North Korea. We will pay particular attention to the manners in which the responses of the Korean and world churches during the Korean War influenced the fate of the remnant Christians in the North. We will also investigate how the remnant Christians responded in the new socio-political context of North Korea, and the kind of relationship they developed with the state in this period.

It will be argued that the ideological struggle with Communism prior to the Korean War, the Christians' support for South Korea and the USA during the war, and the continuous collisions between the state and the remnant Christian community in the North in this period after the war, all helped to cause the isolation of the Christian churches in post-war North Korea. Consequently, when the "Anti-Religious Campaign" began in 1958, the northern Christians were not able to demonstrate that they would make a Christian contribution forwards reconstructing North Korea. In the end, after the campaign, the churches in the North largely disappeared, and the remnants experienced what might be termed a long and cold winter of Christianity in North Korea.

1. The Post-War Context

1.1 Socio-Economic Situation

The truce was concluded on 27th July 1953. Although the armistice was a temporary settlement to cease the hostilities, it was greeted with relief and approval by the people of North Korea. The strains of the war, such as incessant bombing, prolonged fear, food shortages and the loss of relatives, had resulted in widespread *yomjonjueui* or "war-weariness".⁵⁶¹ On the other hand, there was strong hostility towards the USA because of its

⁵⁶¹ G. D. Paige and D. J. Lee, "The Post-War Politics of Communist Korea", R. A. Scalapino ed., *North Korea Today*, London, Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, 18.

indiscriminate bombing, and towards the South, because ordinary people believed that it was the South that had opened the war.⁵⁶²

The previous chapter has shown the degree to which human casualties and material damage were concentrated in North Korea during the war. When the war finished, the gross domestic product of North Korea had decreased to half of what it had been before the war. Agricultural production was reduced to about 25% of its previous level.⁵⁶³ Most industrial facilities, including the railroads, roads and bridges had been destroyed throughout North Korea. It is recorded by a contemporary eyewitness that “families were separated and orphans wandered the countryside”.⁵⁶⁴ Therefore, rehabilitation and reconstruction were the most urgent tasks for North Koreans.

To meet this task, the 6th Central Committee Meeting of the KWP met in April 1953 and introduced the Three-Year Economic Plan (1954-1956) for post-war economic reconstruction. In this plan, Kim Il-sung introduced an economic policy which was to give priority to the development of heavy industry, while simultaneously developing agriculture and light industry.⁵⁶⁵ However, this was later interpreted to mean that the production of consumer goods would be sacrificed in order to concentrate on the development of heavy industry.⁵⁶⁶ The former South Korean Communist group, which had relocated to the North opposed this policy because it did not recognize the popular desire for improved living conditions.⁵⁶⁷ Kim argued that through the nationalization of all industries, including light industries and most means of production, the government could control and maintain a balanced production between heavy and light industries. He also introduced cooperative farms to increase agricultural production.⁵⁶⁸ In spite of criticisms, this plan was evaluated as a successful one by the party, and it was carried through in two years and eight months.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶² “The Communist version of how the war began was still widely believed...”, *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁶³ The statistics are cited from Han-kil Kim, *Hyundae Chosun Yuksa*, (A Modern History of Chosun), Pyongyang, Institute for the Study of History, 1983, 339-340.

⁵⁶⁴ S. McCune, *Korea: Land of Broken Calm*, 108-109.

⁵⁶⁵ Jung-suk Lee, *Hyundai Bukhan eui Yihae*, (A Understanding Modern North Korea), 73.

⁵⁶⁶ Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 140.

⁵⁶⁷ G. D. Paige and D. J. Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 22.

⁵⁶⁸ Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 76.

⁵⁶⁹ Y. T. Kuark, “North Korea’s Industrial Development During the Post-War Period”, R. A. Scalapino ed., *North Korea Today*, 52.

Based on this success, the KWP launched the Five-Year Plan (1957-1961), which devoted attention to machine tools, farm implements, mining machinery and chemical industries.⁵⁷⁰ In this period, most farmland was transformed into cooperatives because the party made a positive assessment of the test trials of the cooperative system which had been undertaken during the Three-Year Plan. Along with the development of the cooperatives, small businesses were also nationalized by 1958.⁵⁷¹ The party reported that the total value of industrial output had risen more than threefold, and the total value of commodities in circulation was about 2.5 times over what it had been in 1957. It has been claimed that the Five-Year plan was completed within two and half years. The remaining time was then called a “transitional period” dedicated to preparing the second Five-Year Plan.⁵⁷² Jung-suk Lee claims that North Korean society accomplished a socialist transformation of production methods in this period.⁵⁷³

Although Kim aimed to achieve the “simultaneous” development of light and heavy industry, the former was less developed in these plans. His political rivals criticized him for this. Therefore, in a new Seven-Year Plan (1962-1969), not only industries but also rehabilitating the cities was emphasized. New streets and municipal buildings were laid out, and public and educational facilities promoted. “New and cozy houses for 600,000 families” were provided, and the urban population increased.⁵⁷⁴

It is generally recognized that these economic plans enabled North Korea to overcome the damage of the war faster than South Korea. It is of interest to study the relationship between the economic growth and military expenses in North Korea in this period. According to Y. T. Kuark, the expenditure on the national defense of North Korea was not more than 6.5% until 1960.⁵⁷⁵ The percentage given to military expenses was not more than 10% of the state budget in the Seven-Year Plan period.⁵⁷⁶ In general, the state investment in relation to military in this

⁵⁷⁰ S. McCune, *Op. Cit.*, 133.

⁵⁷¹ Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 76-77.

⁵⁷² See, A. Hideo, “On the Economy”, *Kita-Chosen no Kiroku*, (Record of North Korea), Tokyo, Shindokushosha, 1960, 75-118.

⁵⁷³ Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 77.

⁵⁷⁴ S. McCune, *Op. Cit.*, 134.

⁵⁷⁵ See, the Table 5. State Expenditure of North Korea in Y. T. Kuark, “North Korea’s Industrial Development During the Post-War Period”, *North Korea Today*, 55.

⁵⁷⁶ C.f.. The military expenses of North Korea in 1998 was Concerning 30% of GNP. For details, see, “North Korea”, *US and Asian Statistical Handbook, 1999-2000*, Washington, Heritage Foundation, 2000.

period was balanced. This balance enabled the government to invest considerable amount of its budget in industrial development, before the beginning of the North-South military competition from 1970 onwards changed the situation.⁵⁷⁷

1.2 Political Power Struggle

In the 1950s, the most serious power struggle in the history of North Korea took place. Many persons who had formed the centers of anti-Communist resistance had taken advantage of war-time chaos to evacuate to the South. Therefore, the political power struggle during the 1950s took place within the Communist Party itself.

After liberation, the KWP was included various streams of the Korean Communist movement. Because of this historical background, although Kim was the prime minister, the KWP was being led by a collective leadership representing several groups of Korean Communists.⁵⁷⁸ The armistice brought an end to the war-time pressures which had helped to ensure cohesion within this factional coalition.⁵⁷⁹ The KWP had five main factional elements.

The “*Kapsan* faction” comprised the immediate associates of Kim Il-sung who had been with Kim during his anti-Japanese guerilla struggle. *Kapsan* was the name of a town that Kim had occupied during the guerilla campaign. The “Soviet-Koreans faction” had returned with the Soviet Army in 1945. Most of them belonged to the second generation of Korean Russians. They had not been active in the independence movement, and some of their leaders could not even speak Korean. The “*Yenan*-Koreans” was another faction rooted in a foreign Communist background. The members of this faction were Communists who had participated in the Chinese Communist revolution as members of the Chinese Communist party. There were also two domestic Communist factions from within the Korean peninsula; the “domestic North Korean Communists,” who had been active in the Japanese period, and the “domestic South Korean Communists,” who had formed the South Korean Worker’s Party (SKWP) before the

⁵⁷⁷ On 15th August 1970, President Park declared *Daebuk Kukryuk Kyungjaeng* or National Power Competition against North Korea. This declaration brought the dramatic increase of military expenses in North Korea. See, Joo-suk Seo, “A Study of Military in North Korea”, in Society of North Korean Studies ed., *Bundan Banseki Bukhan Yunkusa*, (A History of North Korean Studies during the Half Century of Division), Seoul, Hanul, 1999, 125.

⁵⁷⁸ Concerning the stream and the leadership, see, Dae-sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement 1919-1948*; R. A. Scalapino and C. S. Lee, *Communism in Korea: The Movement*, vol. 1.

⁵⁷⁹ G. D. Paige and D. J. Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 19.

establishment of the KWP.⁵⁸⁰ The head of SKWP was Park Hun-young. The SKWP unified with the North Korean Workers Party and formed the KWP in 1948.

When the North Korean army retreated in October 1950, inner conflicts within the KWP began. For example, Mu Jung, the leader of the *Yenan*-Koreans and Ho Kai, the leader of Soviet-Koreans, were purged. This was a rather individual purge because of the failure of operations during the war. However, this purge provoked the antipathy of these two factions toward the *Kapsan*.⁵⁸¹

Moreover, the challenge from the domestic groups was also serious. There was an organized effort to overthrow Kim and replace him with their leader, Park Hun-young.⁵⁸² Park and his followers attempted a military coup in early 1953 during the war but failed, and all the conspirators were arrested. An official educational publication intended for the party members, *Chosun Nodongdang Yoksa Kyojae*, (History Text of the Korean Workers' Party), shows that Kim believed that the US had instigated this coup.⁵⁸³ The leaders of the domestic group were accused on three counts: espionage activities for the US, indiscriminate destruction and slaughter of democratic forces and Communist revolutionaries in the South, and the attempted overthrow of the government by military forces. According to Dae-sook Suh, Park was executed in 1958.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁰ See, G. D. Paige and D. J. Lee, *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁵⁸¹ See, Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 122-126.

⁵⁸² Park was born in 1900 in Yesan. He represented the domestic Communists. He was the best-known Communist during the Japanese occupation and commanded the support of Communists in both North and South after the liberation. He was a founding member of the Korean Communist Party in April 1925, and he studied in Moscow. When he was the chairperson of the South Korean Workers' Party in 1946, he fled to the North because the USAMGIK suppressed the party. Later, Park became vice-chairperson of the KWP, vice-premier, and concurrently foreign minister of North Korea. For his biography, see, Dae-sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948*, 71-72. Dong-kun Hong states that he was the helper of H. Underwood in early 1920s. Underwood introduced the Evangelist Ryu Un-hyung, who was a famous Korean nationalist leader for Park. Park studied at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, where Ryu studied, for a short period. This was to prepare him for his studies in America, with the recommendation of Underwood. When this plan was not successful, Park changed his mind and studied in Moscow. Kim accused Park of being an agent of the US with citing his closed relationship with Underwood and some Americans, to remove him. Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

⁵⁸³ *Chosun Nodongdang Yoksa Kyojae*, (History Text of the Korean Workers' Party), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1964, 297. N.B., Some remnants of this faction resisted Kim rejecting his heavy industry centered reconstruction plan.

⁵⁸⁴ See, Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 130-136.

The *Yenan* and the Soviet Koreans continued to struggle for political hegemony after the war. This began with criticism of Kim's policy, both factions strongly arguing against Kim's rehabilitation policy. This criticism later developed into an anti-Kim Il-sung campaign based on his alleged "monopolization of power" and "personality cult".⁵⁸⁵

There is no doubt that there was truth in this accusation. Kim was commonly referred to as *Suryung* or supreme leader, an appellation reserved only for the greatest. Kim himself used to call Stalin "our dear and respected *Suryung*".⁵⁸⁶ Mao was also called as the *Suryung* of the Chinese people.⁵⁸⁷ It was obvious that Kim expected to be called one of the *Suryungs* of the Communist movement. He began to apply the title of to himself from 1967 onwards, during the "Sino-Korean dispute,"⁵⁸⁸ when he declared the self-reliance of North Korea.

The North Koreans more than matched the long list of prefixes and titles that characterized the Chinese adulation of Mao. Kim was called "the great *Suryung*, the peerless patriot, the national hero, the ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander, an ingenious thinker, the sun of the nation, the red sun of the oppressed people of the world" and so on.⁵⁸⁹ Dae-sook Suh interprets this tendency of personality cult: "it is perhaps understandable that a small country in search of self-identity should launch a campaign to project an image of the unity and stability of its people and political system abroad, and promote their leader in the process".⁵⁹⁰

However, the *Yennan* and Soviet-Korean factions noted the Khrushchev's criticism of the personality cult of Stalin. They had already found some personality cult within the KWP

⁵⁸⁵ G. D. Paige and D. J. Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 22.

⁵⁸⁶ See, Kim's speech on 15th December 1952, at the fifth joint plenum of the Central Committee in Kim Il-sung, *Nodongdang eui Chojikchaek Sasangjeok Kanghwanun Uri Seungri eui Kicho*, (The Organizational and Ideological Consolidation of the Party is the Basis of Our Victory), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1953, 2-57.

⁵⁸⁷ *Chosun Chungang Nyungam 1954-55*, (Yearbook of North Korea, 1954-55), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1955, 14-15.

⁵⁸⁸ The Chinese Red Guards during the cultural revolution made personal attacks on Kim in wall posters and resurrected a perennial problem on the China-Korea boundary by reclaiming disputed territory. The Red Guard also produced a rumor that Kim was arrested by the generals of the Korean People's Army in 1967. Kim criticized this attack as imperialism. He said every party has its own point of view, and it should be respected. The Big Powers tend to be suspicious of others and pressure others to take side. Kim also said, "Koreans would never dance to the tune of others", and declared the independence of Korea. See, Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 188-208.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

during the 1950s. The anti-Kim factions were encouraged by Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization campaign," of the 20th party congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The two groups criticized Kim's exercise of power. They asked for a return to the pre-war collective leadership system at the Third Party Congress of the KWP, 23rd-29th April 1956.⁵⁹¹ Kim refused, and accused these factions of the "fault of dogmatism", which uncritically adopted Soviet experiences and ignored the Korean context.⁵⁹² The highlight of this conflict was the attempted military coup of 1st June-19th July 1956, during Kim's visit to the USSR and the Eastern European countries.⁵⁹³ The coup failed when Kim canceled his schedule and returned to suppress it. He immediately purged the leaders of the two factions, but later restored their positions under political pressure from China and the USSR.⁵⁹⁴ This was a great dishonor for Kim, because China and the USSR asked him to recognize that he had led the KWP in an incorrect fashion. Those remaining from these factions were a danger to Kim's political sustainability. Therefore, Kim set in motion the "Anti-Factionary Campaign"⁵⁹⁵ from 1957-1960 to remove the factions, on the grounds of ideological deviation. Jung-suk Lee describes this period as "the time of political storms" in North Korea, during which Kim mercilessly purged his political rivals.⁵⁹⁶

Kim's immediate problems in the 1960s, however, were not at home, but in his international relations within the Communist world. He was caught in the heat of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Kim was extremely careful to remain neutral and tried to establish North Korea's self-identity. In this manner, he developed the *Juche* (Self-Reliance) Idea during the 1960s.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹¹ L. I. Brezhnev visited this meeting and emphasized the importance of collective leadership in the party. See, *Ibid.*, 146.

⁵⁹² Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 77.

⁵⁹³ Concerning this coup, see, Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 149-157.

⁵⁹⁴ The USSR sent the vice-premier, A. I. Mikoyan, and China sent the Secretary of Defense, Peng Dehuai, in order to release their branches in North Korea. Both considered overthrowing Kim if he would not release the *Yennan* and Soviet-Korean people. Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 423.

⁵⁹⁵ Mongryung Sunwoo, *Inmin Jungkwon eui Surip kwa Keui Kongohwa rul wihan Chsun Rodongdang eui Tujaeng*, (The Struggle of the Korean Workers' Party to Establish and to Strengthen the People's Regime), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1958, 102.

⁵⁹⁶ Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 424. N.B., "Kim relied heavily on the support of his partisans (the *Kapsan*), but he did not fail to seek the support of the people". Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 159.

⁵⁹⁷ It is necessary to understand Kim's "self-reliance" in foreign policy in the context of the 1950s because the USSR and China did not support him in his crises in 1956.

1.3 Emergence of the *Juche* Idea

The issue of national identity plays a highly important role in the history of the Korean people, especially in their struggle against colonial oppressions. People in North Korea had to face extremely complex tasks in all spheres of life after the end of the Korean War. Given the tremendous obstacles faced by the people, including severe starvation, mass homelessness, and abject misery and despair, they could cope with these issues only if they were extremely organized and mobilized. This mobilization, though, could occur only if “national confidence and identity were stimulated”.⁵⁹⁸ There was an objective need to conceive a new ideology that would restore the badly shaken self-confidence of the people, and deepen their sense of national identity.⁵⁹⁹ This was one of main causes for the emergence of the *Juche* Idea.

On 28th December 1955, Kim Il-sung proclaimed the *Juche* Idea to the public.⁶⁰⁰ This idea was established with the goal of making the country independent, self-confident, and self-sufficient. Kim defined the new ideology as follows: “The *Juche* Idea is *Juche* (self-reliance) in idea, *Chaju* (self-independence) in politics, *Charip* (self-sustenance) in economy, and *Chawi* (self-defense) in military”.⁶⁰¹ *Juche* was the principle that was to inspire every effort to strengthen the country.

According to Kim Jong-il, the *Juche* idea originated in Kim Il-sung’s early years of revolutionary activities:

The leader discovered the truth of *Juche* idea in the course of the struggle against bigoted nationalists and bogus Marxists, flunkeyists and dogmatists, while hewing out a new path for the revolution. Finally, he explained the principles of the *Juche* idea at the meeting of Leading Personnel of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League held at Kalun in June 1930, and put forward a *Juche*-oriented line for the Korean revolution. This was a historical event which heralded the creation of the *Juche* idea and the birth of the *Juche*-oriented revolutionary line.⁶⁰²

In the context of the 1930s, Korean Marxists did not recognize independence as a task the

⁵⁹⁸ I. Göthel, “*Juche* and the Issue of National Identity in the DPRK of the 1960s”, H. S. Park, *North Korea: Ideology, Politics, Economy*, New Jersey, Simon & Schuster, 1996, 20.

⁵⁹⁹ Dae-sook Suh describes the mobilization as “the super human drives”, which emphasized “maximum production with evincing thrift”. *Op. Cit.*, 164.

⁶⁰⁰ Kim Il-sung, *Selective Writings*, vol. 4, 325-354.

⁶⁰¹ *The Rodong Shinmoon*, 19th December 1962.

⁶⁰² Kim Jong-il, *On the Juche Idea*, Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982, 7-8.

Korean revolution. They followed dogmatic Marxism and sought an international proletarian revolution against nationalism. Even Korean nationalists, especially those who followed Syngman Rhee's line, also focused on an international diplomatic approach to Korean independence. In this context, Kim instead emphasized the gaining of independence by the Korean people themselves as the primary task of the Korean revolution.⁶⁰³ Under Japanese rule, Kim's *Juche* idea was a mixture of Korean nationalism and Marxism.

However, it was especially from the mid-1950s that the *Juche* idea reappeared, and was theoretically developed as the leading ideology in North Korean society. *Juche* played an important role not only in mobilization, but also in domestic and foreign policy formation. In domestic politics, Kim criticized *Yenan* and Soviet-Korean factions, on the basis that they uncritically adopted foreign Communism for the Korean revolution. Kim said that Koreans should not dogmatically imitate the experiences of other Communist countries, but should instead critically analyze them, and then creatively adopt only those aspects of those experiences that would benefit their own cause. The adoption of foreign ideas should be made at their own pace, and at their own convenience, in view of the situation prevailing in their own country. "One should be the master of one's own revolution".⁶⁰⁴ In international relations, Kim therefore severed what was now called "the two decade long hierarchical relationship of 'master and puppet'" with the USSR and China, and sought out "friends in the Third World" instead.⁶⁰⁵ During the 1960s, the *Juche* Idea also became a sort of applied philosophy through which the North Korean revolution was put into practice. The theoretical and philosophical aspects of *Juche* were nevertheless expanded and developed later, during the 1970s.

Kim's emphasis on "self" sounds similar to the "three self" idea in the Nevius Plan or Three Self Patriotic Movement in China. However, it is difficult to find any evidence of the influence of Kim's Christian background in the development of the *Juche* idea.

⁶⁰³ See, Kim Il-sung, "*Chsun Huykmyung eui Jinro-Kalun eseo Jinhaeng doin Gongchung mit Banjechungnyundongmaeng Jidoganbu Hoeuieseo han Bogo*", (The Way of Korean Revolution: The Report at the meeting of Leading Personnel of Young Communist League and Anti-Imperialist Youth League), manuscript, Kalun, 30th June 1930.

⁶⁰⁴ Kim Il-sung, *Uridang eui Juchesasang kwa Konghwakuk Jungbu eui Taeneoe Jungchak eui mutkaji Munje e daehayeo*, (Concerning Several Problems of our Party's *Juche* Idea and Domestic and Foreign Policy of Our Republic), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1969, 1-13.

⁶⁰⁵ Dae-sook Suh, *Op. Cit.*, 308.

1.4 Hardened Division

Although the war had finished, there was a steady escalation of military competition, mutual distrust, reciprocal vilification and hostility between the two Koreas. The military rivalry between North and South accelerated up to the level of 840,000 troops in the North and 600,000 in the South. The prolongation of division also led to abuses of human rights and justified long-term military dictatorship in both systems in the name of social security.

Until 1972, no peace talks for reconciliation between the two Koreas existed. During these years, Rhee and his successor Park Jung-hee continued the *Bukjin Tonngil* or Reunification by Invasion of the North policy in the South, and Kim strengthened his *Nam Chosun Haebang* or Liberation of the South by the Military policy. Both Koreas often sent guerillas to harass the rear of their enemy.⁶⁰⁶ In this context, any peaceful approach towards reconciliation was regarded as anti-state behavior.

The complete suspension by both sides of postal services, travel, visitation and all other communication between the two Koreas was established in this period, and made them the most distant adjacent countries on earth. The educational systems compelled Koreans to hate each other as irreconcilable enemies, rather than emphasizing their common nationhood.⁶⁰⁷ While at first most Korean people considered the division of their country as temporary, it was gradually accepted that this situation was becoming a fixed reality. Not only geographically and politically but also psychologically, people started to recognize the division of Korea as an established fact.

⁶⁰⁶ During the 1960s, 2,150 South Korean guerillas were killed or lost in North Korea. For details, see, *The Hankyoreh*, 8th, 9th, 10th, October; 2nd, 5th, 6th 22nd November 2000. Also, a number of northern guerillas attacked the South in this period. As a representative case, 31 northern guerillas attacked the House of the President on 21st January 1968 in Seoul.

⁶⁰⁷ When the author was in primary school, all his classmates, including himself, portrayed the North Korean people as red wolves or monsters in a painting class. In 2000, when the summit talk between the North and South was held in Pyongyang, there was a sort of “psychological shock” in the South because South Koreans found Kim Jong-il, the President in North Korea, also had a “human face” with humorous jokes and good manners. See, *The Junngang Ilbo*, 16th June 2000.

2. The Remnant Christians in the Post-War Context

2.1 The Situation of Northern Churches After the Korean War

During the Korean War, the majority of Christians in North Korea had maintained an anti-Communist position, and finally evacuated to the South. About 20 ordained ministers and 50,000 Protestant Christians were left behind. Most church buildings were destroyed by the bombing of US air forces. However, the most serious challenge which the remnant Christians faced was the social antipathy toward Christians that was cultivated by the Communist leadership. Rev. Young-sup Kang describes the situation as follows:

During the war, the majority of the Christians in North Korea supported the American and South Korean armies, which were the enemies of North Korea, and finally evacuated to the South. Therefore, after the war, North Korean people criticized Christianity as an anti-revolutionary American religion. The remnant Christians were ashamed and afraid to say, "I am a Christian". Reconstructing the churches? You know, in this situation, it was difficult to talk about the reconstruction of churches.⁶⁰⁸

This comment reflects the fact that the social antipathy against Christians among most North Korean people was stronger than the remnants expected. Even the NKCA, which had supported the Communists before and during the war, was threatened by this antipathy. Rev. Choon-ku Lee gives a general account of the situation of the remnant Christians:

People were starving. Streets were full of war orphans. Rebuilding public facilities and houses was urgent. The NKCA also tried to support the rehabilitating works, but we had no human and material resources. To rebuild churches, we needed to ask the party for its support so that we could obtain building materials, because of our socialist economic system of North Korea. However, who could ask for that in this situation? All resources should firstly go to the people to provide food, warmth, and houses... In this context, we were not able to rebuild the churches. We just gathered in the houses of members for Sunday service. The former lay leaders of house bible study groups led the worship services.⁶⁰⁹

We can summarize three findings in this account. Firstly, there was a lack of leadership among the remnants. Because of the evacuation of most of the important leaders of the Northern churches, the 20 remnant ministers were too small in number to respond properly in the new context, and could not personally lead the 50,000 remnant laypeople. Secondly, the

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, Chairperson of the KCF, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, Secretary for Mission, KCF and Lecturer of Pyongyang Theological Seminary, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang, North Korea.

NKCA therefore found it difficult to make a Christian contribution towards the rehabilitation work. It even seems that the ministers did not know where they should go. For example, from the end of the war until 1958, the NKCA could not hold an official meeting to discuss ecclesiastical matters.⁶¹⁰ Lastly, it is clear that the traditional bible study meetings in house cell groups⁶¹¹ started to function as worship centers in this period. These later developed into “house churches” in the “revival period” that followed.

2.2 Boycotting Election Again

North Korea had a general election to elect representatives of the Second SPA on 27th August 1957. However, about 2,000 people collectively boycotted the election at Yongchun County, Pyungbuk Province,⁶¹² which had been one of the most important centers of Protestant Christianity in North Korea since missionary times. Immediately, the central party sent security police to investigate the causes. The police noted that farmers in collective farms in the county had been massively absent from their work on Sunday.⁶¹³

After thorough investigation, the police found that Rev. Man-wha Lee had organized about 500 hundred small, secret cell groups of underground Christian life in the area of Yongchun.⁶¹⁴ Rev. Lee had gone underground to organize these secret Christian groups at the end of the Korean War. He had a strong anti-Communist view, influenced by some conservative and evangelistic leaders of northern Protestantism before the war.⁶¹⁵ The police accused Lee and ten other leaders of this underground Christian group of organizing a boycott

⁶¹⁰ Concerning the Assembly Meeting of the KCF in 1958, see following sections.

⁶¹¹ Ever since the Great Revival Movement in 1907, bible study meetings in house cell groups have been developed in Korean churches. Even today most South Korean Christians meet every Friday for bible study. Some theologians in Fuller Seminary emphasize that this meeting has greatly contributed to church growth in Korean. See, P. L. Kannaday ed., *Church Growth and the Home Cell System*, Seoul, Church Growth International, 1995.

⁶¹² Center for the Study of Far Eastern Affairs ed., *Bukhan Jeonseo*, (Collective Writings on North Korea), Seoul, Kyungnam University Press, 1974, 235-236.

⁶¹³ Concerning the collective farming system in North Korea after the war, see, C. S. Lee, “Land Reform, Collectivisation and the Peasants in North Korea”, R. A. Scalapino ed., *North Korea Today*, 65-81; Y. T. Kuark, “North Korea’s Agricultural Development during the Post-War Period”, *Ibid.*, 82-93.

⁶¹⁴ S. Masahiko, *Nambukhan Kidokyo Saron*, (An Argument on the History of South and North Korean Church), tr. M.K.Kang, Seoul, Minjungsa, 1997, 295-296.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 296.

of the general election against the KWP. They were found guilty, and “openly executed” later.⁶¹⁶

Kim Il-sung, who was facing serious political challenges from other factions in the Communist party, strongly criticized this boycott as anti-revolutionary behavior. In a speech in April 1958, he urged severe punishment for Lee, in contrast to the tolerant judgment of the Supreme Court.⁶¹⁷ S. Masahiko claims that Kim personally ordered the execution of Lee.⁶¹⁸ Whether this is true or not, it is important to note that this boycott by underground Christians alerted Kim to the possibility that the activity of North Korean Christians could also pose a challenge to his political power.

To understand the above nervous reaction of Kim, it is necessary to recall that the FPJP had already boycotted two previous general elections before the war, relating respectively to the National People’s Committee and the First SPA, in order to resist the Communist regime. Indeed, the boycott of general elections had been a traditional method of Christian resistance to the Communists in North Korea. Furthermore, only recently, Kim had experienced an attempted military coup by the *Yennan* and Soviet Korean factionaries, who were still in the party with the protection respectively of China and the USSR. In this circumstance, Kim tried to teach everyone a lesson through the execution of Lee and other underground Christian leaders, who had no protection from outside, as a warning to his opponents.⁶¹⁹

Kyung-bae Min, one of the most distinguished church historians in South Korea, claims that Lee followed the opposition paradigm between church and state of the FPJP, with his conservative understanding of the issues involved.⁶²⁰ Lee rejected the election in order not to give legitimacy to the Communist regime in the post-war context. Min sees this as “an extraordinary example of heroic religious resistance against Communist dictatorship in North Korea”.⁶²¹ Whether it was “heroic resistance” or not, it is obvious that this boycott crucially

⁶¹⁶ See, Center for North Korean Studies ed., *Bukhan Minju Tongil Undonsa*, (A History of Democracy and Reunification Movement in North Korea), vol. 2, Seoul, Bukhanyunkuso, 1990, 685-687.

⁶¹⁷ Kim Il-sung, “*Uri Dangeui Sabup Jungchaek eul Kwanchulhagi wihayeo*”, (To Carry on the Policy of Justice of Our Party), manuscript, April 1958.

⁶¹⁸ S. Masahiko, *Op. Cit.*, 296.

⁶¹⁹ N.B., Park Hun-young, the leader of South Korean Communists was executed at this time as well.

⁶²⁰ Kyung-bae Min, *Kyohoe wa Minjok*, (Church and Nation), 443.

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, 443.

affected the fate of Christianity in North Korea in the post-war context: it was one of the main factors that led to the “Anti-Religious Campaign”.

Unfortunately, the underground Christians carried on their boycott during the “political storm” period. In doing so, they gave the Communists a justification to eradicate Christianity in North Korea, because they considered the boycott to be an example of “religious factionary behavior.” Therefore, the Communists introduced the “Anti-Religious Campaign” from 1958, in line with the Anti-Factionary Campaign.

2.3 From the NKCA to the KCF

In 1958, in this extremely difficult situation, the Central Committee of the NKCA held its first meeting since the Korean War. The leaders of the NKCA perceived that Kim Il-sung understood the boycott as a serious instance of anti-state behavior. Therefore, as they had done at the first Christian boycott in the pre-war context, the NKCA reconfirmed their support of Kim’s leadership.⁶²² According to Rev. Choon-ku Lee, who is only source for what happened at the meeting, about 50 committee members participated and approved the following three decisions:

Firstly, the title of North Korean Christian Association (NKCA) was altered to the Korean Christian Federation (KCF).

Secondly, the KCF membership was changed from denominations to Protestant Christian individuals.

Thirdly, the KCF and the members agreed to fully support rehabilitation work and the socialist revolution in North Korea.⁶²³

Here the NKCA leaders tried to create a new image of northern Protestant Christianity by changing the association’s organizational name. The reaction to the boycott from Kim Il-sung, i.e. execution of eleven leaders of an underground Christian group, had been a source of astonishment to them. Therefore, the new KCF intended to “directly guide” individual Christians “to protect them” by giving them a proper account of Communist policy.⁶²⁴ Behind this intention, the NKCA leaders were trying to protect themselves as well, by cooperating with the Communist policies.

⁶²² Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan

⁶²³ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang, North Korea

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*

The KCF was now the sole official Christian organization in North Korea: Since 1958, there have been no other official or known Protestant ecclesiastical organizations in North Korea. This process was very similar to the emergence of the China Christian Council (CCC) through the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). However, there is no evidence of any direct influence from the Chinese Christian experience in the establishment of the KCF.⁶²⁵

Lastly, the KCF strongly affirmed Christian support for the socialist reconstruction of North Korea. In doing so, the KCF tried to reassure Kim Il-sung by affirming that the central organization of North Korean Christianity constantly supported his leadership.

In spite of these efforts, the KCF's standpoint was not enough to persuade the Communists and overcome the tide of Anti-Religious Campaign, which brought a winter of Christianity in North Korea. Even before the new-born KCF was able to develop further policies, the campaign struck not only underground Christians, but also the KCF itself.

3. The Anti-Religious Campaign and the Isolation of the Churches

3.1 The Anti-Religious Campaign

The Anti-Religious Campaign which began in 1958 in North Korea was the Communist way of counteracting the boycott. Although the boycott was carried on in only one county, it was enough stimulation for Kim Il-sung and his followers to oppress the Christians throughout North Korea. The aim of Kim and his followers was to uphold their political hegemony by introducing a much more hostile religious policy than before.⁶²⁶

There was an ideological necessity in this campaign as well. To mobilize North Korean society for the reconstruction, and to stabilize Kim's power by doing this, an ideological unity was necessary for Kim's group in the post-war context. For this purpose, the *Juche* Idea was emphasized. However, in addition to factionary ideologies, Christianity was considered as

⁶²⁵ N.B., In 1985, KCF and CCC met in Shanghai and Naging. This meeting was highly influenced the development of KCF in the context of revival. Concerning meeting, see, *Ching Feng*, May 1985.

⁶²⁶ See, Ha-chul Jung, *Urinun Wae Jongkyo rul Bandae hanunga?*, (Why Do We Oppose Religion?), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1959, 7-10.

another ideological rival of the *Juche*. Therefore, it was necessary for Kim and his followers to develop the Anti-Religious Campaign in parallel with the Anti-Factionary Campaign.

The Anti-Religious Campaign developed in two ways, namely social discrimination and anti-religious ideological propaganda. The KCF leaders claim, even today, that “there has always been religious freedom in North Korea since liberation”.⁶²⁷ However, there is evidence that the Communists persecuted Christians not only during the war but also in the post-war period. In addition to Lee’s group, underground Christian groups in Bakchun County, Pyungbuk Province, in Wonsan and Haeju, in Onchun County in Pyungnam Province were accused by the police, and some leaders were executed and the members sent to work in the mines.⁶²⁸

There was also systematic social discrimination toward Christians. On 30th May 1958, the Central Committee of the KWP approved the document “On the Massive Struggle with Anti-Revolutionaries.” This document advocated the survey and classification of the “social composition” of North Korean society in order to “enhance the level of mass culture” and “to purge reactionaries”.⁶²⁹ Based on this resolution, a nation-wide Communist mass education and social classifying campaign was carried on from 1958 to the end of the 1960s.⁶³⁰ The KWP classified North Korean civilians in three categories: revolutionaries, masses, and anti-revolutionaries. Until the central committee meeting of KWP in February 1964, the KWP removed anti-revolutionary factors of the society. In this period, leaders of the underground Christians such as the above cases were classified as an “undesirable religious reactionary element,” and in many cases sent to concentration camps.⁶³¹

Having achieved the removal of the reactionaries, the KWP continued from 1964 to 1969 to categorize North Korean people according to their class background, attitude during the Korean War, former profession and “socialist morality”. Finally, the Communists classified North Korean people as three classes: the core, the basic and the hostile, and fifty-one sub-

⁶²⁷ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang, North Korea.

⁶²⁸ See, S. Masahiko, *Op. Cit.*, 294-300.

⁶²⁹ KWP Central Committee, “*Banhyukmyung Bunjawaeui Tujaengeul Junkunjungjukeuro Jungaehande daehayeo*”, (On the Massive Struggle with Anti-Revolutionaries), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1958.

⁶³⁰ See, Jae-uk Park, “The Social Class in North Korea”, in his book *Bukhan eui Sahoe*, (North Korean Society), Seoul, Eulryu Munhwasa, 1990.

⁶³¹ Hun Ryu, *A Study of North Korea*, Seoul, Naewoi Munje Yunkuso, 1966, 285.

categories.⁶³² The results of this work determined many aspects of personal and social life in North Korea. For example, it provided reference points for deciding who was to be educated, who was to be employed in what positions, who could be party members, military officials, etc.

According to this categorization, Christians were normally classified as Section 38, the category of those requiring “general and special observation”. Even those Christians who were eager to contribute to the party were put in this category, the members of which were not allowed to be appointed at higher position in the government. For the normal Christians, “special observation” was recommended, and if they created social problems, severe punishment was suggested.⁶³³ In this context of social discrimination towards Christians, it was very difficult for the Christians to openly profess and enjoy their religious life.

The Anti-Religious Campaign was developed as a means not only of social discrimination but also of ideological attack. In 1959, the KWP and its subordinate organizations published six booklets for anti-religious propaganda and education.⁶³⁴ These criticized religious faith as a form of fatalism, which justifies the social *status quo*. Religion is the opium of the people, weakening revolutionary desire with its non-scientific fantasy aimed towards the next world. On this point, the North Korea Communists had an understanding of religion similar to that of other Marxists. Their criticisms of Christianity re-iterate the standard views of the Communist polemics of the period, and lack any originality.

Nevertheless, the authors of these works devoted most space to criticizing Christianity on the basis of their own experience. For example, Ha-chul Jung claims that “Christian mission in

⁶³² See, The Academy of Korean Studies ed., *Bukhan eui Silsang*, (The Reality of North Korea), Seoul, The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 1986, 112-117; In-chul Kang, “A Recognition of Modern Religious History in North Korea”, 183-184.

⁶³³ Center for North Korean Studies, “The Policy on Social Class in North Korea”, in *Bukhan Sahoe eui Jaeinsik*, (A Recognition of North Korean Society), vol. 1, Seoul, Hanul, 1987, 323.

⁶³⁴ Ha-chul Jung, *Urinun Wae Jongkyo rul Bandae hanunga?*, (Why Do We Oppose Religion?), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1959; Hee-il Kim, *Inmin eui Apyun*, (The Opium of People), Pyongyang, Minchung Chulpansa, 1959; Jae-sun Ro, *Jongkyo nun Inmin eui Apyun ida*, (The Religion is the Opium of People), Pyongyang, Minchung Chulpansa, 1959; Jae-sun Ro, *Mije nun Namchosun eseo Jongkyo rul Chimryak eui Dokuro Iyonghago Itta*, (US Imperialists Use Religion as a Tool of Invasion in South Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1959; Won-kyu Paik, *Jongkyo Doduk eui Bandongsung*, (The Anti-Revolutionary Characteristics of Religious Moral), Pyongyang, Minchung Chulpansa, 1959; Won-kyu Paik, *Saengwhal kwa Misin*, (Life and Superstition), Pyongyang, Chosun Yeosung Sa, 1959.

Korea started with Western imperialism” in *Urimun Wae Jongkyo rul Bandae hanunga?*, (Why Do We Oppose Religion?), which was one of the Party’s official textbooks of anti-religious propaganda. Jung highlights the experience of a massacre by the US army, which “the Christians called as divine army”, during the Korean War.⁶³⁵ He reminds readers that the Korean churches supported the invader, USA, and world churches justified US military intervention as a just action. He concludes that Christianity has been a tool of American imperialism in Korea.⁶³⁶ In this logic, being Christian in North Korea meant being an agent of the US imperialist. It is evident that Christian support for South Korea and the US during the war crucially influenced religious policy in North Korea in the post-war context. Lastly, Jung suggests a religious policy as follows:

We need to distinguish among religious people between those who support the policy of our party for the victory of our revolution, and those who are undesirable religious reactionaries attempting anti-revolutionary plots, hindering our march and destroying our socialist construction. For the latter, we must inflict severe punishment...However, for the former, it is false to identify them with the latter. We must persuade them to give up their religious belief through continuous enlightening education, which gives the right epistemology on things. In doing this, we can remove the root of religious remnants in our society.⁶³⁷

It is evident from this passage that the KWP did not intend to persecute the Christians because of Christian faith itself. The Party wanted to remove the root of Christianity because it had supported the South during the war and boycotted the elections. In brief, the criticism was based more on patriotism than on ideological views. This provided a possibility for Christian survival in North Korea, if only the Christians could prove their patriotism. The situation was similar to that of China in 1950, when the Communists had demanded that Chinese Christians demonstrate their patriotism.

3.2 The Results: A Winter of Christianity in North Korea

There are few primary sources that relate the story of the remnant Christians in the period of the Anti-Religious Campaign. North Korean officials deny that there was any religious persecution. During the interviews the author conducted in North Korea, neither KCF leaders nor house church members were prepared to comment on this period, or they simply repeated

⁶³⁵ Ha-chul Jung, *Op. Cit.*, 11-12.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

official statements. However, it is obvious that there was social discrimination against the Christians in this period, and that religious activity was restricted, as the campaign suggested. It is not our main purpose to dig out all detailed stories of persecution in this section. Rather, the section will illustrate the general situation of the remnants during the campaign.

Dong-kun Hong, a lecturer at the Kim Il Sung University, notes that “the Christians in North Korea...passed through the fire-kiln of suffering” during the campaign period.⁶³⁸ The increased social antipathy towards Christians on the part of ordinary people, the social discrimination organized by the government, the regular watch the security police put on them and the persecution of underground church leaders together comprised a winter of Christianity in North Korea. These difficulties were experienced not only by the ordinary Christians but also by the KCF members. R. A. Scalapino and C. Lee state that in this period even pro-Communist Christians were doubted, and were under regular observation.⁶³⁹ Even the KCF was daunted by the campaign. For instance, before 1958, the NKCA had regularly appeared in the reports on the United Front produced by the KWP. However, from 1958-1971, there was not a single mention of the activity of the KCF.⁶⁴⁰ It seems that only the central office of the KCF existed, in Pyongyang, during this period.⁶⁴¹

It seems too that in this period, there were two kinds of phenomena among the remnant Christians. A lot of Christians must have given up their faith, because the total number of Protestant Christians reduced from 50,000 in 1953 to 5,000 in 1972.⁶⁴² Obviously, one of main causes of this was social discrimination. Under such terrible circumstances, it would be very difficult for ordinary Christians to continue with their religious life.

In another case, some Christians voluntarily withdrew from Christian faith because they were ashamed to be Christian. Here is a story of a lady who gave up her faith:

⁶³⁸ Dong-kun Hong, *Miwan eui Kuihyang Ilki*, (The Uncompleted Diary of Homecoming), vol.2, 91.

⁶³⁹ R. A. Scalapino and C. Lee, *Communism in Korea*, vol. 3, 610.

⁶⁴⁰ See, *Chosun Choongang Nyungam*, (Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, from 1954 to 1971.

⁶⁴¹ So far, Church historians in South Korea claim that the KCF did not exist in this period, and that revived in 1972. However, Rev. Choon-ku Lee, the lecturer of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary, confirms that the KCF has been in existence since 1958 under its current title. Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, Pyongyang, 3rd April 2001.

⁶⁴² For detailed statistics on Protestant Christianity in North Korea after 1972, see, Part Three, Chapter VI.

Her husband was a Christian leader who opposed the Communist policy. He evacuated to the South alone during the war because he was afraid of the US nuclear bombing. She had several children and was poor. He prayed for material blessing to educate her children. However, their children had a benefit to study in higher education due to the socialist educational system in North Korea. Later, she told her children, "your father believed God and evacuated to the South, leaving us behind...He opposed the Republic and praised America. However, you have had the benefit of free education in this socialist country. Therefore, I insist you must be good Communist civilians supporting the Republic".⁶⁴³

Some Christians they abandoned their faith due to the anti-religious propaganda of the Communists. However, the campaign was not able to entirely eradicate all the roots of Christianity. Remarkably, there were house cell groups that continued to function as communities of the remnant Christians. For example, Elder Se-yong Kang of the Nakrang House Church in Pyongyang states that she was able to attend a regular prayer meeting in a house group even in this period.⁶⁴⁴ This would be a special case because she was a daughter of Rev. Byung-suk Kang, the assassinated leader of the NKCA in 1946. According to Se-yong Kang, the Communists tolerated this Christian house community, whose members had contributed in the construction of Communist North Korea. However, in many cases, such communities were not able to openly enjoy Christian life. Therefore, most remnant Christians kept their faith individually,⁶⁴⁵ or went underground. For example, an underground Christian community in Onchun County in Pyungnam Province was detected, and its members sent away as mine workers in 1968.⁶⁴⁶

Despite Kim Il-sung's denial of religious persecution, this period of North Korean history seems similar to the "cultural revolution" years in China. Except for a few Christians, it was extremely difficult to exercise religious freedom from 1958-1971. As a result of the Anti-Religious Campaign aimed against the Christians, the KCF was isolated and the Christian churches disappeared in North Korea, except for a small number of house groups. It was indeed the winter of Christianity in North Korea.

The Anti-Religious Campaign lasted thirteen years from 1958 to 1971. It was extremely difficult witness openly to the Christian faith. The Jangdaehyun Presbyterian Church, which

⁶⁴³ Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 156-157.

⁶⁴⁴ Interview with Elder Se-yong Kang, Pyongyang, 6th April 2001.

⁶⁴⁵ Dr. Insik Kim, Coordinator of Asia and Pacific, PCUSA, states that his family in North Korea individually read the Bible and prayed in this period. Interview with Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, Fukuoka, Japan, 13th December 2000.

⁶⁴⁶ See, Kwang-suk Choi, "Religious Life in North Korea", *Bukhan*, (North Korea), April 1972, 305-306.

was a symbolic place for northern Protestantism, became the People's Learning Center. The Pyongyang Theological Seminary ceased to train theological students. However, even in those days, the Christians did not altogether cease to meet. Hundreds of house groups met in homes, worshipped and studied the Bible together, without ministers.⁶⁴⁷ Kyung-seo Park claims that the South Korean Christians too, must learn this strong faith, following the example of the northerners.⁶⁴⁸

The *Juche* Idea provides a theory on the material world and social revolution in North Korea. However, there are other aspects of human life, including spiritual desire and questions on the next world. When Dr. Seung-duk Park, the director of the Institute for the *Juche* Idea, was questioned on how the *Juche* Idea interprets the next world, he answered, "you Christians teach us spiritual matters."⁶⁴⁹ He also recognized the ceaseless efforts of northern Christians to keep the Christian faith during in this period.⁶⁵⁰

There are a number of factors which enabled the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea after 1972. Above all, it was possible to revive because the remnant Christians had maintained their faith and met in house groups. Indeed, this was "the holy stump" of Christianity in North Korea.

⁶⁴⁷ This experience was similar to Chinese Christian experience during the Cultural Revolution period. See, K. H. Ting, "The Church Endures", in R. L. Whitehead ed., *No Longer Strangers: Selected Writings of K. H. Ting*, New York, Orbis, 1989, 132-135.

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, former WCC Asia Secretary, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

⁶⁴⁹ Quoted from *Ibid.* See also, Sung-duk Park, "*Juche Sasang eui Jongkyokwan*", (Understanding on Religion of *Juche* Idea), in The Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America ed., *Christianity Faith and Juche Philosophy: Christian and Juche Dialogue for Reunification of Motherland*, Seoul, Sinang kwa Jisungsa, 1993, 182-194.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 194.

Conclusion to Part Two

When Korea was liberated, Christianity and Communism, which were both widely respected among the northern *minjung*, encountered each other as ideological rivals in constructing a new nation-state. Part Two of this thesis has examined the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea with special reference to the Christian ideological struggle with Communism. It was of interest to investigate how each encountered, struggled and related with the other, and to note the kind of church-state relationship the had developed as a result.

After the liberation, Kim Il-sung invited the Christians to join the united front for national construction. However, the northern churches repeated the paradigm of opposition between church and state because they believed that Christianity could not coexist and cooperate with atheistic Communism. Furthermore, the Christians competed for political power by organizing Christian parties. In this political competition, the collision between the Christians and the Communists escalated with the boycott of the general election on Sunday Sabbath, and the attempted assassination of Kim. One of the main reasons behind this collision was the land reform, because many of the Christians had upgraded their social status from *minjung* to become members of the elite through modern education, and they had recently emerged as landlords in the North. Another important reason for this collision was that the northern churches had had only a single paradigm of church-state relations in their experience so far, the oppositional paradigm. The Christians adopted this paradigm again in the new context of liberation and Communist national construction that had come into existence.

On the other hand, a cooperational paradigm also emerged, promoted by the leaders of the NKCA. The NKCA recognized that the Communist reform was necessary in North Korea, and supported it. With the support of the Communists, the NKCA had taken the ecclesiastical initiative by 1949, and introduced a radical renewal program for northern Protestantism in the Communist context. However, this renewal was carried on by a top-down method, which depended on ecclesiastical power that rendered it ineffective. The renewal also lacked a proper theological justification, and there was insufficient Christian reflection on it. Because of these limitations, finally, the renewal of the NKCA was not able to take deep root among ordinary Christians, and it resulted in failure.

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, the NKCA leaders continued their cooperational paradigm. They justified the war as a just war. However, the majority of Christians did not see it this way, and opposed their Communist state. They welcomed the allied army as a “divine army” attempting to liberate the northern Christians, and supported it. Not only the Korean churches but also the Western churches, including the WCC, supported the US position on the Korean War, as was evident in the issuing of the Toronto Statement. Finally when the allied army retreated, the majority of Christians evacuated to the South because they were afraid of the reaction from the Communists.

After the war, only one fourth of Protestant Christians and a few NKCA ministers were left behind the Iron Curtain. However, they did not dare to openly reconstruct Christian churches because there was increased social antipathy toward the Christians, most of whom had supported the enemy. In this post-war context, some of the remnants again boycotted the general election, indicating that they still did not accept the legitimacy of Kim’s regime. This boycott brought about a reaction from the Communists. A severe “Anti-Religious Campaign” was introduced. This was accompanied with the legalizing of social discrimination against Christians, the execution of some underground Christian leaders and much anti-Christian propaganda. Finally, not only underground but also even pro-Communist Christians, belonging to the KCF (formerly the NKCA), were in difficulty to openly enjoy religious life after 1958. The cold winter of Christianity in North Korea lasted until 1972.

The issue of church-state relations was one of the crucial issues determining the fate of Christianity in North Korea during this period. Prior to the liberation, Protestant Christianity in North Korea had succeeded by introducing the oppositional paradigm between church and state. However, after the establishment of the Communist regime, the repeat of this paradigm caused a failure of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. Although a new paradigm of cooperation emerged under the leadership of the NKCA, it was not widely adopted among the grassroots Christians in North Korea until 1972.

Part Three

Church, *Minjung* and State: The Revival and Renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, 1972-1994

Introduction

One of the aims of Part Three is to analyze the revival of the churches in North Korea. Whether conservative or progressive, historians in South Korea find one of the crucial causes of the revival in the close relationship between the KCF (church) and the KWP (state). For example, Kyung-bae Min insists that the KWP revived the KCF for its own political propaganda purposes.¹ Similarly, In-chul Kang claims that the northern churches revived because of the cooperation paradigm of church and state.² However, this fails to explain why the former NKCA, which had a similar paradigm, was not successful. We will argue that in order to interpret the inner dynamics and motivations of the revival correctly, the element of *minjung* must also be added to the picture. The manner in which the efforts of Protestant Christianity in North Korea for the *minjung* influenced the process of the revival will be clarified. Both the *minjung* element and the aspect of church-state relations need to be taken fully into account in any attempt to understand the revival. It will thus be argued in Part Three that the revived Protestant Christianity in North Korea has developed a “*minjung*-centered cooperation paradigm between church and state,” which is quite different from the former cooperation paradigm of the NKCA.

The triangular reality of church, *minjung* and state will also help to define the two key concepts that characterize Chapters VI and VII: revival and renewal respectively. The concept of “revival” in Chapter VI is an external reference, denoting the institutional growth of the KCF, on the basis of the 1972 Platform, as a federation of house churches, growing in number with an increasingly professional leadership of theologically-trained pastors. In evangelical circles, “revival” often means movements of spiritual awakening that are followed by church growth. As used in this thesis, “revival” refers to the KCF’s constructive engagement with the KWP that resulted in the rapid growth of house churches. By 1994 there were 511 of these house churches, and they provided the backbone of the revival of Christianity and of Christian engagement in public life in North Korea. The concept of “renewal” in Chapter VII, on the

¹ Kyung-bae Min, *Church and Nation*, 443.

² In-chul Kang, “A Recognition of Religious History in North Korea”, 198.

other hand, is an internal reference, denoting the theological and diaconal identity of North Korean Christianity, with special reference to developments from the late 1980s up to 1994.

As a result of the Christian opposition to the Communist state, there was no officially recognized church in North Korea from 1958-1972.³ This was mainly due to the Communist Anti-Religious Campaign. However, North Korean Protestant Christianity revived after 1972, in a publicly recognized fashion. It is of interest to examine how this was possible after the one and half decades of “non-existence”.

The aim of Part Three of this thesis, therefore, is to give a comprehensive account of the history of the revival and renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, paying special attention to the *minjung*-centered approach to church-state relations from 1972-1994. It will be argued that Protestant Christianity in North Korea revived through an authentic renewal of its mission in the Communist context. This stands in contrast to the earlier attempt at renewal led by the NKCA that ended in failure. The churches that have revived since 1972 have carried out a “Social *Diakonia* Mission,” emphasizing mission for the *minjung*. In line with this, it will also be argued that the renewal of the KCF was not a compromise but an effective accommodation with the KWP. The NKCA attempt at renewal failed to take root among grassroots Christians because it lacked theological foundations and a commitment to mission. However, the revived KCF carried out an authentic Christian-*Juche*an Dialogue in order to articulate its theological identity. It will be argued that the KCF has succeeded in justifying its presence and mission in North Korean society theologically, through this dialogue. Lastly, as we stated above, it will be argued that the revival had a *minjung*-centered approach on the issue of church and state, and that this was the key to its success.

This Part makes constructive use of primary research materials, drawn from archives and interviews. Although the author of this thesis has succeeded in collecting wide range of original sources, he was not able to access the minutes of the General Assembly meetings of the KCF, which would shed light on important decisions taken by the KCF in relation to the renewal and revival of northern Protestantism. Unfortunately, the KCF does not allow anybody from outside to access the minutes yet.⁴ However, the author was able to hear of

³ “Rev. Yang-Uk Kang’s Interview”, in *Bukhan* (North Korea), July 1974, 126.

⁴ N.B., Since the revival, the general assembly of KCF was held in every four years, from 1973 to present.

important decisions of the assemblies through interviews with KCF leaders, who have participated in the organization's general assemblies, such as Rev. Choon-ku Lee.

Chapter VI

The Revival of Northern Churches, 1972-1988

In this chapter, we will examine how Protestant Christianity in North Korea revived after the Anti-Religious Campaign. A comprehensive account of the history of the revival will be given. It will be argued that the revival of the northern churches was not merely a claim of Communist propaganda, but an authentic ecclesiastical revival that was accompanied by changes in the Communist understanding of Christianity.

1. The Context of Revival

1.1 The New Constitution and Election

The period from 1972-1988 can be characterized as a politically stabilized, or static era in North Korea. Kim Il-sung exercised absolute power, and disallowed any political opposition. During the 1950s, Kim had faced serious internal political challenges from his Communist rivals. He overcame these challenges through the strong Anti-Factionary Campaign. In the 1960s, there was an external crisis, the Sino-Soviet Dispute, which threatened his leadership. China and the USSR both wanted North Korea to take sides with them, and each of them limited Kim's power through frequent intervention in the domestic affairs of North Korea. Against this, Kim declared the independence of North Korea by maintaining *Juche*, or self-reliance.

In this context, the year of 1972 was a very important turning point in not only the ecclesiastical but also the political history of North Korea. In that year, Kim Il-sung succeeded in rewriting the constitution and was elected president of the republic at the fifth SPA.⁵ The general election of 12th December 1972 was the most remarkable election for Kim.⁶ In contrast to previous general elections, there was neither a Christian boycott, nor factionary resistance nor foreign influence.⁷

⁵ N.B., Kim was the premier of the cabinet before 1972. Concerning the political development in North Korea in this period, see, V. Mikheev, "Politics and Ideology in the Post-Cold War Era", in Han S. Park ed., *North Korea: Ideology, Politics, Economy*, 87-104.

⁶ According to article 87 of the Constitution, the SPA is the highest sovereign organization in North Korea. People elect the representatives of SPA through direct, equal and secret vote. The term of representatives is five years except in extraordinary circumstance. The SPA also elects the president

As soon as the fifth SPA formed, it made two important decisions in its first meeting, 25th-28th December 1972. The KWP introduced a bill before the assembly suggesting amendments to the constitution. It was generally recognized that the constitution needed to be revised because it had been established before the Korean War, in the context of national construction.⁸ The 1948 Constitution was aimed at legally establishing achievements made by the “anti-feudal democratic revolution,” and “providing a favorable condition for socialist revolution.” Known as the socialist Constitution, the 1972 constitution was aimed at consolidation of North Korea as a socialist republic.⁹ The new constitution passed the SPA unanimously on 27th December.

A number of changes distinguished the new constitution from the old, such as lowering the voting age from eighteen to seventeen¹⁰ and the moving the capital from Seoul to Pyongyang.¹¹ However, the most radical changes were the substitution of *Juche*, Kim’s own political thought, for Communism as the official ideology of the state, the establishment of Kim’s own revolutionary tradition as the tradition of Korea,¹² the institution of the new office of President of the Republic¹³ and the creation of a new, all-powerful administrative organ called the Central People’s Committee.¹⁴ The new President of the Republic was head of state, concurrently serving as commander of the armed forces and chairman of the National Defense Committee. He had power to issue edicts, grand pardons, and conclude and abrogate treaties.

of North Korea due to the 1972 Constitution. Concerning the SPA, see, Ministry of Unification ed., *2000nyun Bukhan Gaeyo*, (Introduction to North Korea, 2000), Seoul, Ministry of Unification, 2000, 103-114.

⁷ The elections which followed were the Sixth SPA in 1977, the Seventh in 1982, the Eighth in 1986, the ninth in 1990, and the tenth in 1998. See, Kap-sik Kim, “*Bukhan Choikoinminwiwonhoe eui Kinunge daehan Yunku: Injeondae Kinung eul Junsimuro*”, (A Study of the Supreme People’s Assembly in North Korea with Special Reference to the Role of Transmission Belt), M.L. Dissertation, Seoul National University, 1994.

⁸ Concerning the context of the first constitution, see, Kyung-seop Yoon, “*1948nyun Bukhan Hunbup eui Chejung Baekyung kwa geu Sungrip*”, (The Context and Establishment of the 1948 Constitution of North Korea), M.L. Dissertation, Sung Kyun Kwan University, 1996; Concerning the development of the constitutions, see, Korea Legislation Research Institute ed., *Bukhan eui Hunbup Gaejung kwa Ipbub Donhyang*, (The Amendments of the Constitution and the Tendency of Legislation in North Korea), Seoul, Korea Legislation Research Institute, 1994.

⁹ See, *On the Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, Pyongyang, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1975.

¹⁰ *The Socialist Constitution*, Article 52.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Article 149.

¹² *Ibid.*, Article 4.

¹³ See, *Ibid.*, Chapter Six, “The President of Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”.

¹⁴ See, *Ibid.*, Chapter Seven, “The Central People’s Committee”.

Dae-suk Suh interprets the new constitution as “the proclamation of (North Korea’s) transformation into an independent state.” The country would no longer be ruled by “a satellite Communist party created and heavily manipulated by domineering Communist superpowers (as it had been) in the past.”¹⁵ In order to preserve and develop the independence of North Korea, Kim needed to become a head of state in fact as well as in law. However, it has to be noted that in the process of transformation, there was a degeneration of the *Juche* Idea. What is manifest in the constitution of 1972 should be considered trivia compared with what is being practiced in the North. Kim’s lust for power was satiated only by unbounded loyalty and absolute submission throughout his domain. His cult of personality has been said to eclipse those of such Communist leaders as Stalin and Mao in scope, magnitude, and fervor.¹⁶ Indeed, his cult demanded not only subjugation to him but also reverence for his parents and loyalty to his son. He practiced not Communism, in the so-called socialist state, but rather a peculiar brand of oriental despotism.

In this process, the *Juche* Idea played a role of ideological justification. Article 4 of the new constitution declared that North Korea was guided in its activity by the *Juche* Idea. The article describes the *Juche* Idea as “a creative application of Marxism and Lennism to the condition peculiar to the country”.¹⁷ Jang-yup Hwang, the former director of the Institute for *Juche* Idea,¹⁸ says that the *Juche* Idea began to degenerate into mere “*Kimilsungism*” from this moment.¹⁹ By adopting the *Juche* Idea as national ideology in the 1972 constitution, Kim Il-sung became the national hero not only in practical politics but also from an ideological and philosophical perspective. Hwang, who was directly involved, says that from 1972, Kim asked *Juche* scholars to focus more on the role of the *suryung* (supreme leader) in the Korean revolution, to justify his supreme power.²⁰

¹⁵ Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 270.

¹⁶ Byung-chul Koh, “Political Leadership in North Korea: Toward a Conceptual Understanding of Kim Il Sung’s Leadership Behavior”, *Korean Studies*, vol. 2, 1978, 139-157.

¹⁷ *The Socialist Constitution*, Article 4.

¹⁸ It has been known that Hwang (1923-) *de facto* philosophically theorized the *Juche* Idea. He studied philosophy for his doctoral degree at the University of Moscow during the Korean War. He was the President of Kim Il Sung University from 1965-1972, and served as the Chairman of SPA from 1972-1983. He was also the founding director of the Institute for the *Juche* Idea. He was the minister of Foreign Affairs of the North Korean government from 1984-1997. He evacuated to South Korea after criticizing the political succession of Kim Jong-il in 1997. For his biography, see, Jang-yup Hwang, *Nanun Yuksa eui Jinri rul Boatta: Hwang Jang-yup Hoegorok*, (I Have Seen the Truth of History: Memoirs), Seoul, Hanul, 1999.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 181.

²⁰ See, *Ibid*, 162-186.

Under the new constitution, Kim was elected as the President of North Korea. Although he was elected for a four-year term, it allowed re-election without restriction.²¹ The elevation of Kim from premier of cabinet to President of the Republic was not merely a change of title. Now, Kim was able to grasp total political power as the “great leader” in North Korea, in the year of his sixtieth birthday. The political stability which then followed in North Korea, under its undisputed supreme leader, was an important aspect of the context in which Protestant Christianity revived. In this atmosphere, the Communists no longer regarded the Christians as a possible political threat.

1.2 The North-South Dialogue

In the 1970s, there began to be definite signs of a realignment in the old East-West confrontation. There was a Sino-American rapprochement and the Soviet-Japanese and Sino-Japanese peace treaties were concluded. It was in 1972 that all these dramatic changes became historical realities.²² The Cold War climate that had created the division of the Korean peninsula was changing. Both North and South Korea were forced to readjust their position to cope with the new developments. Kim Il-sung took two steps in the hope that he could keep up with the rapidly developing international changes. One was to open a dialogue with the South Koreans to explore the possibilities of reuniting the country; the other was to broaden and solidify his ties with the Third World.²³

As early as the second plenum of the fifth Central Committee of the KWP in April 1971, Kim began to discuss the problem of reunification seriously. The North Koreans agreed to meet South Korean representatives of the Red Cross in August 1971. More important than the Red Cross talks was Kim’s apparent willingness to discuss the issue of reunification through political consultation. After some secret talks between intelligence officials from both sides, Kim Young-joo from the North and Lee Hu-rak from the South, a dramatic joint communiqué

²¹ See, *The Socialist Constitution*, Article 90.

²² N.B., The Shanghai communiqué issued by US and China was dated 27th February 1972. The Soviet Foreign Minister, A. Gromyko, visited Japan for the treaty in 1972. The Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka visited Beijing for the Sino-Japanese peace treaty in September 1972.

²³ In dealing with the Third World, Kim was successful in having the North join the conference of nonaligned nations while South Korea’s bid for membership was rejected. He was also successful in having many Third World countries endorse a pro-North Korean resolution in the UN during this period. Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 249-251.

was issued on 4th July 1972, comprising seven articles. The first delineates three principles upon which the dialogue was to be conducted. These principles are worth quoting here because Northern and Southern Christians, too, have used them as a basis for carrying on “their” reunification talks.

First, unification shall be achieved through independent efforts without being subject to external imposition or interference.

Second, unification shall be achieved through peaceful means, and not through use of force against one another.

Third, a great national unity, as a homogeneous people, shall be sought first, transcending differences in ideas, ideologies and systems.²⁴

Two Koreas which had experienced a fratricidal war through inviting foreign forces into the peninsula two decades ago, now committed themselves to following an independent and peaceful approach for reunification through mutual recognition. After three separate preliminary meetings in subsequent months, both sides agreed to establish the North-South Coordinating Committee on 4th November 1972. A series of reunification talks undertaken through this committee lasted until 1975.²⁵

However, the following year, President Park Jung-hee of South Korea rejected the reunification talks and tried to perpetuate the division of the country, as a means of prolonging his military dictatorship.²⁶ The government of the third republic of the South that had ruled for a decade after a military coup prepared for another decade in power by introducing a revitalized constitution (*Yusin Hunbup*) and martial law in October 1972, Park himself being confirmed as the permanent president. One of the justifications of Park’s original coup had been to achieve reunification, but once his position was secure, he rejected further talks.

For the northern churches, the North-South dialogue, while it lasted, created a new opportunity for revival. On account of it, North Korean society was exposed to the South and

²⁴ For the full text of the communiqué in Korean, see, *Nambuk Taehwa Paekseo*, (White Paper on the North-South Dialogue), Seoul, Nambuk Chojul Wiwonhoe, 1975, 36-37. The same text can be found in North Korean publications in *Chosun Chungang Nyungam* 1973, (The Yearbook of North Korea, 1973), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1973, 336-337. The English text can be downloaded from [ysiwyg://192/http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/1953/nscomm.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/1953/nscomm.htm).

²⁵ For the chronology of the dialogue between North and South, see, Republic of Korea, National Unification Board, *South-North Dialogue in Korea*, No. 54, Seoul, 1992.

²⁶ Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 269-270.

outside. Often, during the dialogue, North Korea was questioned as to whether there was religious freedom. This question was posed in such a way that it focused on the presence of Christians and existence of churches in North Korea.²⁷ It must have caused some embarrassment to North Korean Communist officials, who claimed the superiority of their political system over that of the South. Through the dialogue the North Korean Communists also began to learn about the Christian struggle for democracy and support for the *minjung* in the South. Until then, for the Communists in the North, the image they had of Christianity was only as an “American imperialistic religion”. However, the *minjung* movement and *minjung* theology of the southern churches gave them a different picture altogether. It was an extraordinary experience for them, which forced them to reconsider their understanding of Christianity.²⁸ Consequently, for the first time, Kim Il-sung made an open address in 1973, in which he recognized that “Christianity has some resources for the liberation of *minjung*.”²⁹

1.3 Military Competition and Economic Situation

From the end of the 1960s, North Korea dramatically increased military expenditure. The military outlay in the national budget jumped from about 2.6 percent in 1961 to 5.8 percent in 1964, reaching 10 percent by 1966. The following year it tripled to 30.4 percent and remained in the 30 percent range during the 1970s.³⁰ It was certainly over-investment and broke the balance of the national budget. This policy was motivated by the country’s declaration of self-reliance. Within the framework of the *Juche*, the further idea of self-defense in military power, known as the *Jawi*, was emphasized in this period, in order to free the military forces of North Korea from their dependence on China and the USSR.³¹

At first, this unbalanced over-investment in the military budget was regarded as a temporary one. However, on 15th August 1970, President Park of South Korea declared *Daebuk Kukryuk*

²⁷ For example, see, the interview of Rev. Yang-uk Kang in this chapter, section 2.1.

²⁸ From 1974-1983, the KCF announced Concerning ten supportive statements for the *minjung* theologians, and official party magazines regularly reported their struggle. This will be argued in detail in later sections of this chapter.

²⁹ KWP, *Chosun Joongang Nyungam*, (The Yearbook of North Korea), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1974, 261.

³⁰ Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 219-220; J. Lee, *A Recognition of Modern North Korea*, 81. Cf., Y. T. Kuark gives a slightly different statistics. It was less than 6.5% of national expenditure from 1953-1959, and kept Concerning 10% from 1960-1966. See, Y. T. Kuark, “North Korea’s Industrial Development During the Post-War Period”, 55.

³¹ Jung-suk Lee, *Ibid.*, 81.

Kyungjaeng (對北國力競爭), or the National Power Competition, against North Korea. This declaration resulted in heavy military competition between North and South.³² Therefore, inevitably, North Korea continually failed to balance its budget. One possibility for North Korea to return to normal economic management, and a balanced national budget, was through the peace talks of 1972. However, these failed, and North Korea lost an opportunity to decrease its military expenditure. Economically, this had a direct and negative effect on ordinary North Koreans.

South Korea deliberately intended to bring about the collapse of the North Korean economy through the military competition. There had been US troops with an enormous amount of military equipment in the South since the Korean War. While this US presence in the South continued, North Korea rejected military support from China at the end of 1960s. Furthermore, South Korea experienced rapid economic development after 1970. This meant that military expenses were far more burdensome to North Korea than they ever were to South Korea, which had advantage of a US military presence and a large, expanding economy.³³

Over-expenditure on military expenses caused a depression in North Korea's national economy.³⁴ Kim indicated as early as 1965 that the pace of economic development had been retarded because of increased military expenditure, and the goals of the Seven-Year Economic Plan would not be met on schedule.³⁵ The fifth party congress of the KWP was delayed until 1970 on account of the Seven-Year Economic Plan being extended another three years in order to meet the goal.³⁶ The increase in military expenses forced the government to cut down expenditures in other areas, such as health, education and social welfare.³⁷ Therefore, the economic life of ordinary people was getting worse in this period.

³² See, Joo-suk Seo, "A Study of Military in North Korea", in Society of North Korean Studies ed., *Bundan Banseki Bukhan Yunkusa*, (A History of North Korean Studies during the Half Century of Division), Seoul, Hanul, 1999, 125.

³³ For detailed statistics about the economic gap between the North and South in this period, see, Republic of Korea National Reunification Board ed., *Statistics of North Korean Economy*, Seoul, Republic of Korea National Reunification Board, 1986; Eui-gak Hwang, *The Korean Economies: A Comparison of North and South*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993.

³⁴ For detailed statistics, see, Korea Institute for Defense Analysis ed., *The Analysis of Military Expenses of North Korea*, KIDA, 1980.

³⁵ Kim Il-sung, "New Year Address on 1st January 1965", *Selective Writings*, vol. 4, 195-240.

³⁶ Concerning the plan, see, J. S. Chung, "North Korea's Seven Years Plan (1961-1970): Economic Performance and Reforms", *Asian Survey*, vol. 12, 1972, 527-545.

³⁷ Kim emphasized, "most of our workers do not work for money, nor do they need any material incentive. They demand nothing more than the state's guarantee of their livelihood, and they work

2. The Revival of Churches

2.1 The New Platform

During the Korean War, most church buildings in North Korea were destroyed or used as hospitals and for other public facilities. However, this did not mean the disappearance of the Christian community. The remnant Christians gathered in house groups for worship and fellowship. Nevertheless, due to the harshness of the Anti-Religious Campaign, most Christians kept their faith individually, and many house groups remained underground.

In 1972, the central committee of the KCF gathered together to discuss the revival of the churches in North Korea, and adopted what it called a “new platform”³⁸ for this purpose. Firstly, the KCF declared that Christianity is a patriotic religion of North Korea. The KCF declared that the Christians fully supported their government, and would cooperate with its policy:

With patriotism, we will make efforts for the prosperity of the country upholding the constitution and policy of the Republic government.³⁹

It is understandable that the new platform thus starts by expressing strong support for the state. The KCF needed to reassure the government because of the history of opposition between the church and the state in North Korea. The revival of the churches was not aimed against the government, and would not threaten its authority. This was not merely political lip service paid to the Communist government. Rather, Protestant Christianity was genuinely trying to root itself among the North Korean people as a patriotic religion, and shed its image of being a tool of “American imperialism”.

Secondly, the KCF explained further some of the ways in which the revival would benefit North Korean society:

conscientiously”. Paradoxically, this speech shows the difficult economic condition of ordinary workers in this period. Kim Il-sung, “Speech at the Eighteenth Plenum of the Central Committee on 16th November 1968”, *Selective Works*, vol. 5, 284.

³⁸ See, Appendix F.

³⁹ *The Platform of the Korean Christian Federation*, 1972, Article 1.

We will strive to eliminate all sorts of discrimination based on gender, nation, religion, property and class, and to establish a free, equal society founded on the spirit of Christian Charity.⁴⁰

The second article indicated that the revived church would not work only for the Christians. Rather, it promised that the Christians would contribute to the wider community. In fact, the platform went on to confirm that the KCF would rejoin the United Front, strongly committing itself to stand with other social organizations for the independence and reunification of Korea.⁴¹

Then thirdly, the KCF expressed its ecclesiastical concerns:

The KCF will work to defend the freedom of faith and religious life for the development of Christianity in *Chosun* (North Korea), including work for evangelism, and the rights and demands of the Christians.⁴²

Although the internal concerns of the KCF, the actual revival and spread of Christianity comes thirdly, this was nevertheless a powerful declaration, demanding religious freedom in North Korea. It also shows great confidence in the solid faith of the remnant Christians. As a matter of fact, the revised constitution ensured the freedom of religion, in its article 54. However, at the same time, it also guaranteed what it called “the freedom of anti-religious propaganda”.⁴³ Article three of the platform of the KCF was a strong request to the government to realize the spirit of the constitution, and not to apply it only one-sidedly. The KCF tried to confirm that the freedom of faith in the new constitution specially included the freedom of evangelism. This can even be interpreted as an indirect criticism of the “freedom of anti-religious propaganda”, which was a left-over from the Anti-Religious Campaign, which had been used to restrict and suppress evangelism. The KCF understood the freedom to evangelize as an essential aspect of the freedom of religion.

We can summarize by noting that the KCF’s revival platform pushed Protestant Christians in North Korea in three directions. Firstly, the KCF confirmed their support for the government. Secondly, the KCF intended to commit itself to the development of the wider community.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Article 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Article 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Article 3.

⁴³ “Citizens have freedom of religious belief and freedom of anti-religious propaganda.”, *The Socialist Constitution*, Article 54. N.B., The freedom of anti-religious propaganda was completely deleted in the constitution of 1992.

Thirdly, the KCF would defend the freedom of faith and evangelism. Like the “Christian Manifesto” in China, the 1972 platform was a short, but historic declaration. It provided a common basis for the development of Protestant Christianity in North Korea among both the KCF leaders and the house church Christians from 1972 onwards.

2.2 The Revival of the KCF and the House Churches

In addition to the new platform, in the same year (1972) the revived central committee of the KCF decided to reopen the seminary, register individual Christians and reconstruct the ecclesiastical order of the KCF. This was to be an institutional revival of the northern Protestantism. However, behind it, there was also the revival of the house churches, which is most significant from the perspective of *minjung*. Here, let us stop to listen to a story from the Protestant Christians in Kaesung.

Before the Korean War, there were 850 Protestant Christians in Kaesung city. However, only about 200 of them were left behind after the war, and they had no pastor. When the war finished, the remnant Christians in Kaesung divided themselves into three sections, the western, northern and eastern, and organized each house church with about ten members in 1954. They justified this because “believers are scattered, and some are too old to walk distances to worship in homes”.⁴⁴ However, here we can find a way of organizing house churches among the Christians in Kaesung similar to Man-hwa Lee’s underground group, which was persecuted in 1957. In fact, the Christians in Kaesung must have organized the house churches in order to continue their religious life “silently,” without stimulating a reaction from the Communists.

During the Anti-Religious Campaign, the house churches existed underground.⁴⁵ This effort of grassroots Christians without a single pastor shows an extraordinary commitment not only to keeping their faith, but also to protecting their faith community, in the house churches,

⁴⁴ NCCUSA, “Confidential Report of the NCCCUSA Official Delegation Visit to North Korea”, 19th June-2July 1987, 20-21. N.B., There are two versions of the report, the official report and the confidential report. The NCCCUSA does not open the confidential report to the public, which includes a full record of the visit, because of political sensitivity.

⁴⁵ Still, most interviewees in North Korea did not want to make any comment about the campaign. Dong-kun Hong describes, “The remnant pastors, who had walked out the fire-kiln of suffering, shut their mouth, and they are saying in silence.” Dong-kun Hong, *Uncompleted Diary of Homecoming*, vol. 2, 90.

amidst the terrible atmosphere created by the Anti-Religious Campaign. They even worked hard in the collective farms and factories, and were actively involved in the socialist reconstruction works in order to make a good reputation for themselves.⁴⁶ Without this effort, it would have been impossible for the Protestant churches in North Korea to revive, even in the changed context that arose from 1972 onwards. When they reopened eventually their churches in 1972, they did so by themselves, without the assistance of the KCF. When the Christians in Kaesung first met the pastors from outside, the delegation of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) states that they simply shed tears and embraced them. The delegation felt that these tears symbolically expressed the efforts the Kaesung Christians had made to keep their communities alive.⁴⁷

The number of Christians in Kaesung who joined the KCF in 1972 is unknown. However, in 1985, the provincial committee of the KCF in Kaesung reported that the house churches in the city had fully recovered, and all had joined the KCF.⁴⁸ This indicates two things. Firstly the revival of the house churches was not a single event. Rather, it took more than a decade for them to recover to the point where there was the same number of them as there had been before the Anti-Religious Campaign. Secondly, not all house churches immediately became members of the institutionally revived KCF. It took more than ten years before all the house churches in Kaesung had fully joined up with the KCF.

In this story, it is clear that the grassroots Christians were the people who originally developed the house church tradition in North Korea. It was only in the early 1980s that the Kaesung house churches became closely related to the KCF. The Kaesung Christians, who had not a single ordained pastor, organized their churches as house churches after the Korean War. They preserved their faith communities underground, in spite of persecution, from 1958-1972. Even after 1972, they have revived and strengthened their communities by their own initiative. This characteristic allows us to define the house churches as the *minjung* Christian community in North Korea.

In 1972, when the Anti-Religious Campaign finally disappeared, the KCF did not have exact statistics of how many Christians remained in North Korea. Therefore, surveying the remnant

⁴⁶ Interview with Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

⁴⁷ NCCUSA, *Op. Cit.*, 20.

⁴⁸ NCCCUSA, *Op. Cit.*, 20. There were 120 members of the KCF in 1985.

Christians, and registering them with the KCF, was an important task for the KCF to undertake, as they set about reconstructing ecclesiastical order. However, the Christians in the underground must have been suspicious of the new approach of the government, and possibly of the KCF as well. The registration work of the KCF must have been delayed because of misunderstanding and mistrust of the Christians concerning its purpose.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, after a certain period of observation, the majority of Protestant Christians did join the KCF. This resulted in a dramatic increase of the membership of KCF.

Table 9) Distribution of Membership of the KCF, 1984-2002⁵⁰

Year	1984	1988	1996	2000	2002
Membership	5,000	10,000	12,000	12,343	13,043

The statistics given above for 1984, 1988, and 1996 are approximate number for the membership of the KCF. These were reported either to foreign delegations or in ecumenical meetings. Only more recently, (as in the statistics for 2000 and 2002) did the KCF announce the exact numbers of its membership. Although the figures were approximate, it seems that the membership was doubled in the four years from 1984-1988, and increased by about 300 members annually from 1988-1996. Choon-ku Lee states that, in this period, “approximately, half of the increase was new believers, the other half being individual Christians who were joining the KCF for the first time.”⁵¹

By 1984, the KCF had finished surveying the situation of house churches across North Korea. There were about 500 house churches, and each church had about ten members. The average age of the Christians was fifty-five years old, and 70% of them were women.⁵² It is certain that the majority of the churches had joined the KCF by 1984, as was the case in Kaesung. In

⁴⁹ Interview with Jong-ro Lee, Secretary for International Relations, KCF, 13th December, Fukuoka, Japan. The KCF recognizes that still there are Christians, who do not registered with the KCF.

⁵⁰ The statistics of 1984 are from J. Moyer et al., “Visit of a Delegation to the D.P.R.K. from May 24 to June 10, 1984”, Lutheran World Federation, 4; 1988 from T. M. Brown, “Trip Report: East Asia, October 27-November 28, 1988”, Asia/Pacific Desk, Anglican Church of Canada, 20th February 1989, 7; 1996 from K. Park, “North Korea-Background of the Churches” WCC Memorandum, 25th June 1996, 1; 2000 from Y. Kang, “Keynote Speech”, The Seventh Korean Christian Conference for Peaceful Reunification of Fatherland, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Manuscript, 4; 2002 from Y. Kang, “Keynote Speech”, The Eighth Korean Christian Conference for Peaceful Reunification of Fatherland, 23rd June 2002, Tozanso, Unpublished Paper, 3.

⁵¹ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, the secretary for mission, KCF, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁵² NCCCUSA, “Report of the Official Delegation Visit to North and South Korea, June 19-July 3, 1987”, 9.

other words, by 1984, the house churches and the KCF seem to have reached a situation of mutual trust. One evidence for this was that both jointly launched a national Christian campaign in 1985, based on a common demand.

Hence, at the general assembly of the KCF in 1985, the representatives of the houses churches and the KCF leaders decided together to begin the *Ileoburin Shinja Chatki Undong* or the Campaign to Find the Lost Believers. This campaign would last four years, until 1988.⁵³ Its target was to find individual Christians to invite them to house churches, and encourage them to register with the KCF.⁵⁴ For instance, Soo-ik Lee had attended Sunday school with his parents, but he was “far away” from Christianity in his adulthood. His Christian friends “re-evangelized” him, and he became a deacon in a house church.⁵⁵ It seems, however, that the campaign was not targeted only at individual or former Christians. Hyun-chul Kim was in his twenties in the period of campaign, but he had never been in a church, although his late father had been an elder. He became a Christian under the guidance of Rev. Young-sup Kang, who had been a friend of his father’s.⁵⁶ This shows that the “campaign to find lost believers” was an evangelistic tactic of the house churches and the KCF. Through this efficient campaign, the membership of the KCF was doubled in only four years. It is certain that one of the characteristics of Protestant Christianity in North Korea is its strong interest in evangelism, in accordance with the evangelistic tradition of Korean Christianity. More recently, in 2002, the KCF has again launched yet another evangelism campaign, aiming to increase membership to 14,000 by 2004.⁵⁷

However, even in this evangelistic movement, the contribution of house church was remarkable. Although it was launched by the initiative of the general assembly of KCF, the “doer” of the movement was the house church and its ordinary members. For this reason, the growth of membership of the KCF through the campaign does not mean merely an increase of in the number of existing Christians who are registering, but rather an increase in new house church members as well. As Lee points out, half of new KCF membership in this period was the “new believers”. That means the new membership of house churches increased by about

⁵³ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, the secretary for mission, KCF, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁵⁴ Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, former Asia Secretary of WCC, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

⁵⁵ Interview with Mr. Soo-ik Lee, 12th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

⁵⁶ Interview with Mr. Hyun-chul Kim, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan

⁵⁷ See, Young-sup Kang, “Keynote Speech”, The Eighth Korean Christian Conference for Peaceful Reunification of Fatherland, 23rd June 2002, Tozanso, Unpublished Paper.

5,000 from 1984-1988, and these new members also registered with the KCF. By 1988, the ordinary attendance of each house church had increased to about twenty as well. Indeed, through this campaign, both the house churches and the KCF had been strengthened. Moreover, both were getting closer to each other through campaigning together.

In addition to the evangelistic achievement, the Campaign thus strengthened the relationship between the KCF and the house churches. It seems that by 1988, the house churches fully recognized the KCF leadership as their representative ecclesiastical body, as a result of the campaign. However, the house churches and the KCF have not always had the same expectations about future ecclesiological development.

The house church is a unique ecclesiological form of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. It may be described as a small congregational community under lay leadership. At first, the remnant Christians started to organize house groups in the disaster of the Korean War. The Christians met in the houses of lay leaders to carry on their religious life because their pastors had evacuated to the South. During the Anti-Religious Campaign period, the state officially abolished the house communities, but many continued to exist underground. In this context, the church had to be organized as a small and lay-centered secret faith community for survival. This small and secret lay-centered congregational model of house church, under persecution, is similar to the ecclesiastical form of the First Church, during the early centuries.

However, in 1988, there was a new phenomenon in the house church tradition in North Korea. From 1972 onwards, the underground house groups had been coming out into the open, and registering with the KCF. With the reopening of the seminary, the house groups began to be developed as house churches, where ordained ministers would proclaim the Word of God and celebrate the sacraments. The house churches also recovered their baptism, ministry and Eucharist, based on Presbyterian tradition.⁵⁸ As consequence of the positive results of the evangelism campaign, and the ecclesiological embodiment of the house churches, remarkably, in 1988, the Bongsu Church was built in Pyongyang, and has now 450 members. The Chilgol Church was built in 1991 in memory of deacon Kang Ban-suk, the mother of Kim Il-sung, and has now 150 members. The two churches absorbed more than half of the 50 house churches in Pyongyang. From 1988, a new congregational model began to emerge in North

⁵⁸ Concerning this development, see, Chapter VI, Section 3.

Korea, and was evident in the Bongsu Church and the Chilgol Church. As in the South Korean Church, senior and associate pastors were appointed, elders were elected, choirs were organized, and the church buildings were beautifully decorated by the Christians of the two churches who belonged to the urban elite.

The KCF, which took the initiative in constructing these two churches, said them as a symbol of the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. Indeed, it was an historic event in the history of the North Korean church. The Christians were proud of what they had finally achieved.⁵⁹ However, when the KCF encouraged by these successes, tried to build another church in Hamhung, the house churches there rejected it.⁶⁰ Although the establishment of two organized churches in the capital city was highly impressive for the grassroots Christians in Hamhung, they preferred the atmosphere and fellowship of their house churches. As a matter of fact, this rejection was predicted when some former house church Christians criticized the atmosphere of the Bongsu Church. E. Weingartner notes that during his days in the Bongsu Church, about twenty former Nakrang House Church members returned to their house church:⁶¹

They soon found that it felt uncomfortable in such a large setting. There were many people in the congregation whom they did not know. It seemed impersonal. After the service people simply returned to their homes. They did not have any chance to stay and mingle. They missed the quiet of their meetings, the comfort of communing with those whom they trusted. They missed having snacks and drinks and visiting with each other after worship. Eventually, they left Bongsu and reassembled their small house church.⁶²

This indicates the reason why the house churches do not hurry to construct church buildings and big congregations. Indeed, the 511 house churches⁶³ which overcame “the fire-kiln of suffering” have mostly developed as a distinct ecclesiological structure in North Korea, which preserves close fellowship between believers.

⁵⁹ Interview with Se-yong Kang, 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁶⁰ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka.

⁶¹ Interview with Eric Weingartner, 12th April 2001, North Bay, Canada.

⁶² E. Weingartner, “God Leaves No One Without Hope”, Unpublished Paper, 25th March 2001, 4-5.

⁶³ The statistics are taken from Young-sup Kang, “Keynote Speech”, The Eighth Korean Christian Conference for Peaceful Reunification of Fatherland, 23rd June 2002, Tozanso, Unpublished Paper, 3.

The structure of the KCF is a combination of administrative function and ecclesiastical order. Kyung-seo Park says, "The Korean Christian Federation is *de facto* the post-denominational church in North Korea like the China Christian Council."⁶⁴ However, although the main tradition has been Presbyterianism in Protestant Christianity in North Korea, the KCF is not a general assembly, but a loose federation of house congregations. Ecclesiastical life largely depends on the experience and tradition of each house church.⁶⁵ In other words, the ecclesiastical polity of KCF is similar to that of congregationalism.

However, although there was some tension between the KCF's intention of effecting a kind of centralization and the congregation centered approach of the house churches, both have fitter themselves into the ecclesiastical structure of the KCF since the revival. For the KCF leaders, they needed the support of house churches to be authentically the central ecclesiological body. On the other hand, the house churches also needed to be protected by a powerful central Christian organization, but on their own initiative. Because of their need for each other, neither wanted to continue the *status quo* and, together, they gradually strengthened the KCF as a central Protestant organization.

To do this, firstly, the KCF recovered its General Assembly in 1973. From 1946-1954, the assembly meeting had been held annually. The next general assembly after 1954 was in 1958.⁶⁶ After that, the KCF was not able to hold another assembly meeting until 1972, because of the Anti-Religious Campaign. Therefore, it was urgent for the KCF to revive its ecclesiastical governing structure, since denominational structures had not existed in North Korea since the Korean War.

After the revived central committee meeting in 1972, the KCF held its Eleventh General Assembly meeting in 1973, in Pyongyang, to approve the proposals of the central committee for the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. Choon-ku Lee remembers that there was a deep emotion and thanksgiving to God for the revival during the assembly.⁶⁷ The revived assembly unanimously approved the new platform and the decisions of the central

⁶⁴ Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, the former Asia Secretary of WCC, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

⁶⁵ Interview with Mr. Eric Weingartner, 12th April 2001, North Bay, Canada.

⁶⁶ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁶⁷ The general Assembly meeting of KCF has been held in 1946, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, 73, 77, 81, 85, 89, 93, 97, and the 18th assembly was in 2001. *Ibid.*

committee.⁶⁸ Since 1973, the KCF has held a general assembly every four years, at which it has carried out its businesses and made important decisions, such as electing the KCF chairperson, general secretary and central committee members,⁶⁹ evaluating the activity of the central committee, revising the platform, and making policy etc.

Beneath the general assembly, the central committee has met twice in every year. The committee elects the executive committee members and executive secretaries, and governs the business of the secretariat in accordance with the mandate of assembly. The committee members are usually twenty-five, chosen to represent each regional body within the KCF.⁷⁰ The Pyongyang Theological Seminary is also under the governance of the central committee.

The executive committee is composed of the chairperson, general secretary and four executive secretaries. It coordinates and shares out the work of each unit. Under the committee, the general secretary plays the role of chairperson of the secretariat.⁷¹ There are also four executive secretariats in the units of mission, organization, finance and international relations.⁷²

As local structures, the representatives of each house church form the county committee of the KCF. Before the famine in 1993, the role of provincial committees was similar to that Presbytery in Reformed tradition (i.e. governing house churches, conducting ordination of pastors and elders etc.). However, since the famine and economic crisis in North Korea, the province and county committees have been developed in such a way that they promote local development projects and provide food distribution, supported by foreign Christian organizations. There are fifty county committees and ten province committees within the KCF, and each province committee has about five staff members.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

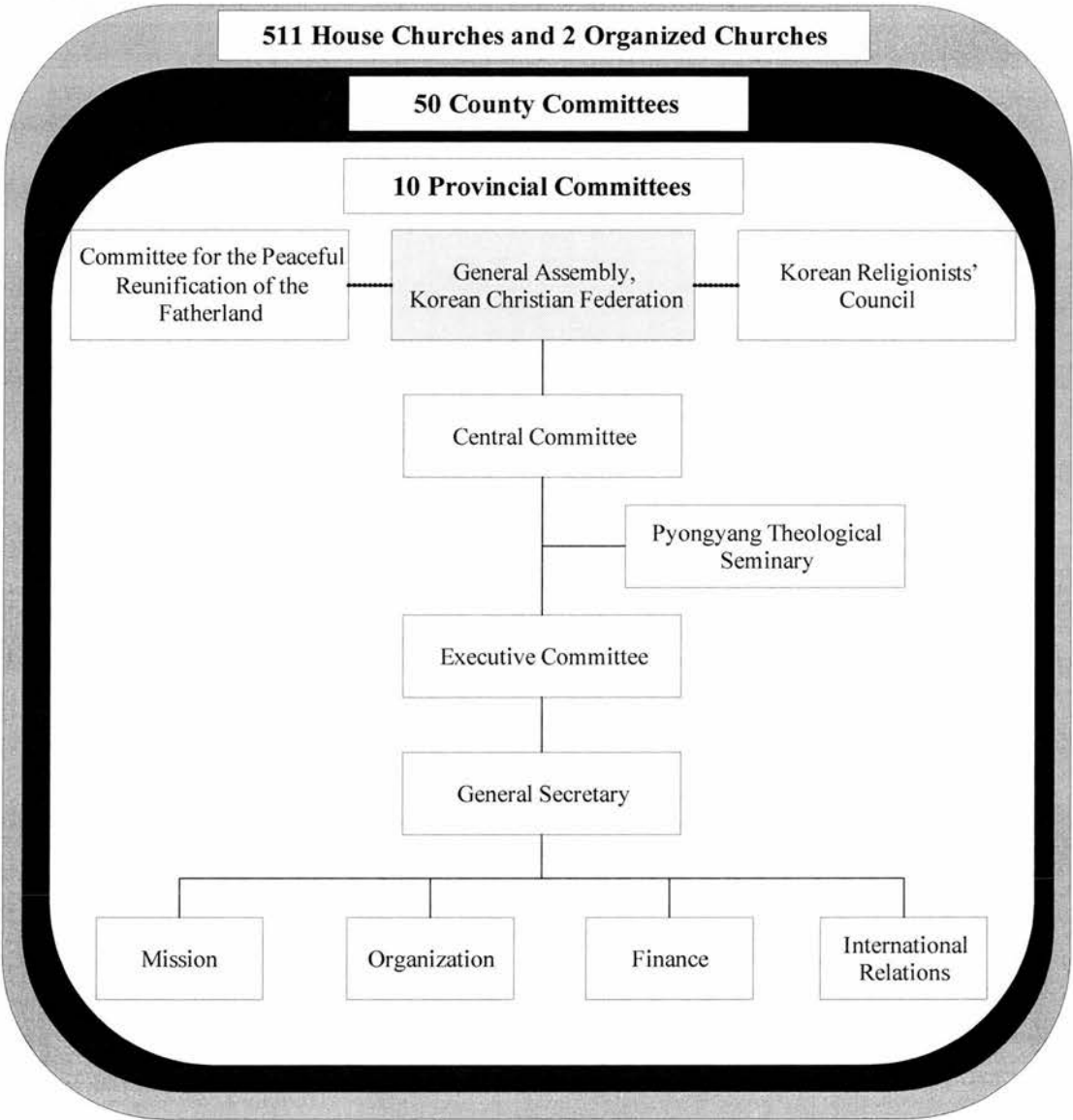
⁶⁹ N.B, Rev. Young-sup Kang, the current chairperson of KCF was elected at the 15th General Assembly in 1989. Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka.

⁷⁰ Jung-hyun Paik, *Bukhanedo Kyohoege Itnayo?*, (Are There Christian Churches in North Korea?), 58-59.

⁷¹ The general secretaries, who have served since 1972, and their period are as follows: Sung-ryul Kim (1972-1981), Duk-ryong Kim, 1979-1981, Ki-jun Koh (1981-1994), Chun-min Lee (1994-2001), Kyung-woo Oh (2001-present).

⁷² There were 30 staff members in the central office of the KCF in 1997. "From the Central Committee of Korean Christian Federation to Asia Desk, World Council of Churches", June 1997.

Table 10) Ecclesiastical Structure of the KCF ⁷³



Apart from its ecclesiastical structure, the KCF is also a member of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification for the Fatherland. This is a united front unit under the KWP, which is concerned with the political reunification of the peninsula. The Korea Religionists' Council (KRC) is another organization of where the KCF belong. It consists of the Korean Christian Federation, the Korean Buddhist Federation, the Korean Chondoist Association (*Tonghak*), and the Korean Catholic Christian Association. It promotes religious peace and religious cooperation for the peaceful reunification of Korea.⁷⁴

⁷³ The information on this table is based on the report, "From the Central Committee of the Korean Christian Federation to the Asia Desk, World Council of Churches", June 1997.

⁷⁴ Concerning other religions and KRC, see, Heung-soo Kim and Dae-young Ryu, "A Study of the Present Situation of Religions in North Korea and Possibility of Religious Exchange between the

2.3 Underground Church

The house church has been the basic ecclesiological structure, being in practice the local congregation, in the revived Protestant Christianity in North Korea. However, there are controversial arguments among South Korean scholars about whether the house churches are genuine or not. As we noted, the KCF reported that there are 511 house churches and two organized churches as its member churches.

In spite of the KCF's report, some conservative South Korean scholars claim that this statistic was fabricated, and there exist only "secret underground house groups" in North Korea.⁷⁵ Tae-woo Koh claims that the genuine church in North Korea disappeared through the Anti-Religious Campaign, and that the small numbers of house churches used to gather only when foreign Christian delegations visited North Korea.⁷⁶ K. M. Wells also asserts that there are not 511 house churches under the KCF, but about 200 underground churches.⁷⁷ T. J. Belke, shows the hand-copied Bible, the letters and photos of underground Christians as evidence of the existence of underground churches.⁷⁸ However, in contrast to the detailed statistics of KCF, these scholars do not provide details on the underground churches. They justify this on the ground that their intention is to protect them.

A second group of scholars who recognize the existence of the 511 house churches, but claim that there are only two "official churches", Bongsu and Chilgol Church and a few urban house churches, that are the member churches of the KCF. They claim that the majority of house churches still remain underground.⁷⁹ However, this claim is out of date, because the majority of house churches had joined the KCF during the 1980s.

North and South", *History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 16, 2002, 123-180.

⁷⁵ See, Kyung-bae Min, *Church and Minjok*, 449-450; Sung-min Ryu, "A Study of Religion in North Korea", in Society of North Korean Studies ed., *Budan Baseki Bukhan Yunkusa*, (A History of North Korean Studies during the Half Century of Division), Seoul, Hanul, 1999, 428-429; Young-han Kim, "Peaceful Reunification and Mission of the Korean Churches", in PCK ed, *Bukhan Kidokyo Chongram*, (A Collective Study on Christianity in North Korea), Seoul, PCK, 1995, 77-78.

⁷⁶ Tae-woo Koh, *Bukhan eui Jonkyo Jungchaek*, (The Religious Policy in North Korea), 16-20; 153-158.

⁷⁷ K. M. Wells, "Protestantism in North Korea: An Exploration", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 11, 1983, 135-145.

⁷⁸ T. J. Belke, *Juche: A Christian Study of North Korea's State Region*, Bartlesville, Living Sacrifice Book Co., 1999, 141-155.

⁷⁹ See, Hee-gon Eun, "The Mission of the Methodist Church toward North Korea and Its Prospect", in

Lastly, contrary to the above claims, there are progressive scholars who insist that there are no underground churches in North Korea. Kyoung-seo Park maintains that in the North Korean context, secret Christian groups are not able to exist because the central government completely controls the whole society.⁸⁰ Ha Choi, who is a political refugee from North Korea, is another who states that there is no possibility for underground churches to exist.⁸¹ It seems true that it is very difficult for any secret underground church to survive in such a totalitarian society. However, there are Christian groups outside the KCF. The KCF itself recognizes that there are about 5,000 Protestant Christians, who have not yet registered with them.⁸² This suggests that although the government tolerates them, there non-registered Christians continue the tradition of an underground church in North Korea.

Historically, there were three categories of underground churches in North Korea. From the establishment of the Communist regime, the *Hyuksin Pokku Pa* or Reformed Restoration Group, later *Jaegunpa* or Restoration Group, was the first to go underground.⁸³ Secondly, there were the anti-Communist Christians who were not able to evacuate to the South, and went underground during the Korean War.⁸⁴ Man-hwa Lee's group is an example of this. Lastly, the biggest number of remnant Christians went underground during the Anti-Religious Campaign.

More recently, a considerable number of secret, underground Christian groups have begun to organize in North Hamkyung Province. During the famine in North Korea, especially from 1993-1996, more than one million people fled to Manchuria for food. Some South Korean missionaries in Manchuria, who were disguised as businessmen,⁸⁵ started to evangelize this

The Western Annual Conference ed., *Pyunghwa Tongil kwa Bukhan Sunkyo*, (Peaceful Reunification and Mission to North Korea), Seoul, Seobuyunhoe, 1998, 208-210; Jung-hyun Paik, *Are There Churches in North Korea*, 184-190. .

⁸⁰ Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, 28th November 2000, Seoul; See also, J. Noh, "An Evaluation and Prospect on the Mission of Korean Churches toward North Korea"; Jong-hwa Park, "A Prospect and Task of North Korea Mission after the Summit Talk between North and South" The Symposium on Mission to North Korea, July 2001.

⁸¹ *The Kookminilbo*, 6th September 2000.

⁸² See, J. Moyer et al., *Op. Cit.*, 4; T. M. Brown, *Op. Cit.*, 7; NCCCUSA, *Op. Cit.*, 22; Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000.

⁸³ Concerning the *Hyuksin Pokku Pa* or Reformed Restoration Group, see, Chapter III, Section 2.3.1.

⁸⁴ Concerning Man-hwa Lee's group, see, Chapter V, Section 2.2.

⁸⁵ It is illegal to work as a missionary in China, and the Chinese government does not grant missionary a visa.

“uprooted people” from North Korea, and sent them back to the border towns in order to organize underground Christian groups.⁸⁶ Although it is hard to study the details of this movement because of its secrecy, it seems true that underground Christian groups have been organized through this route. On 12th April 2001, the KCF sent a letter to the NCKK as follows:

The Christian organizations in South Korea say that they are strengthening mission activity for underground Christian groups in the North. They secretly send Bibles, and support the evacuation of refugees... It must be a mean trick to disturb our relationship between the KCF and the South Korean churches, to dishonor the reputation of the KCF, and to hinder our mission in North Korea...We would like to humbly ask the NCKK to inform other Christian organizations in the South not to do this anymore.⁸⁷

This new underground group is separate from the history of the traditional house churches and underground groups in North Korea. It tries to transplant South Korean versions of Protestant Christianity into North Korea, while ignoring the socio-historical context of Christianity there. As the above letter indicates, this aggressive approach already creates ecclesiastical tension between the northern and the southern churches, and even makes difficulties for the KCF. Moreover, it may also create some problems of safety for historical underground groups.

In conclusion, as the conservative scholars claim, it is true that there are underground Christians in North Korea. However, it is also virtually certain that the majority of house churches are members of the KCF. The house churches have been the mainstream in Protestant Christianity in North Korea, and the backbone of its revival.

It is also necessary for the progressive scholars to recognize the presence of underground Christians. The diversity that exists in North Korean Protestant Christianity ought to be recognized, so that other, minor Christian traditions present in the country are not ignored. Authentic unity, even for the KCF itself, must be achieved through unity in diversity.

⁸⁶ See, T. J. Belke, *Op. Cit.*, 147-161; Kyung-il Choi, *Bukhan Bokeumhwaro Kaneun Kil*, (The Way to Evangelize North Korea), Seoul, Jihyewon, 1999, 39-51; *The Kookminilbo*, 17th December 2001; *The Joongangilbo*, 18th June 2001; *Le Monde*, 20th June 1999.

⁸⁷ “From Rev. Kyung-woo Oh to Rev. Don-wan Kim”, 12th April 2001.

3. The Reopening of Pyongyang Theological Seminary

The revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea began with the restarting of theological education. From the Korean War until 1972, there had been no theological education in North Korea. Therefore, for the KCF, the training of new pastors was the most urgent priority for the revival. Rev. Ki-jun Koh (1921-1994),⁸⁸ the former general secretary of the KCF, described the situation as follows:

In 1950 there existed a seminary in Pyongyang, which was also destroyed in the war. For a long time this seminary did not exist. In the past we had many pastors. Some died in the war, others went to the South. Those who were left became old and many have died. When this seminary was reorganized in 1972, there were only 10 ordained pastors left in North Korea. They were old and anxious about the training of new pastors.⁸⁹

Just as the Anti-Religious Campaign was an external challenge for the Christians, so too the lack of pastors was a serious internal crisis for the KCF. Syngman Rhee, the moderator of the PCUSA from 2000-2001, tells the story of his sister as follows:

When I firstly visited North Korea in 1978, I met my younger sister, who was a maternity doctor. I wondered and asked whether she had kept her faith. She said, 'I personally read the Bible and pray the Lord's Prayer'. I asked, 'What about house churches?' 'I heard, but there is neither a pastor nor house church near my home.' She said, 'Many former Christians no more believe God because they have been taught that religion is an unscientific illusion'.⁹⁰

This shows how difficult it was for the remnant Christians to contact pastors in the context of 1972. The ten elderly pastors who remained were not able to cover house churches and individual Christians widely scattered across the whole nation. Although there were lay leaders like Ki-jun Koh,⁹¹ preaching and sacraments were rare and very restricted in house churches. Communion was usually held only twice a year, at Easter and Christmas, conducted

⁸⁸ Rev. Koh was born in Jungsan in Pyungnam Province. He studied at Pyongyang Theological Seminary from 1975-1977 and was ordained in 1978. He served as the general secretary of the KCF from 1981-1994. He was a well-known North Korean church leader in international ecumenical circles. He contributed to the reconciliation talks between the North and South Korean churches, the Christian-*Juche* Dialogue and the WCC Glion meetings. For his curriculum vitae, see, Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 279-280.

⁸⁹ E. Weingartner, "Confidential Report: CCIA/WCC Delegation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 9-16 November 1987", 21.

⁹⁰ Interview with Rev. Prof. Syngman Rhee, the moderator of PCUSA, 25th September 2000, Seoul.

⁹¹ Rev. Koh was a lay leader of house church. Later he was ordained after theological training in the reopened seminary.

by circulating pastors. On these occasions several local congregations would come together.⁹² However, even this was limited to the house churches in larger cities. According to Elder Se-yong Kang, the service of her house church was simply a matter of “reading the Bible and singing hymns together”.⁹³ Full worship services and celebrating the sacrament has recently become possible again due to the appointment of a young pastor, Sung-sook Lee, to her church.⁹⁴ In this context, the priority of the reopened seminary was to train pastors.

The Pyongyang Theological Seminary was opened in 1901 by Samuel Moffet.⁹⁵ From its establishment, the seminary had been the main theological training center of the PCK. It was abolished by the Japanese in 1938 because the professors and students opposed *Shinto* shrine worship. With liberation, it reopened in 1945. However, with the outbreak of the Korean War, it was closed again. An institution which saw itself as the direct continuation of Pyongyang Theological Seminary later reopened in the South, as the Assembly Theological Seminary. Due to the division of PCK and PCK-Hapdong in 1959, this seminary was renamed as the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the PCK. On the other hand, in the North, in 1972, the KCF once again reopened the original Pyongyang Theological Seminary.

This seminary of the KCF offers a three-years course of Bachelor of Divinity.⁹⁶ Most students have degrees in other subjects before entering their theological training. For example, according to Evangelist Bong-il Paik, all but two of his ten classmates, who graduated in 1995,⁹⁷ had university degrees before getting into theological education.⁹⁸ In every three-year,

⁹² NCCUSA, “Confidential Report of the NCCCUSA Official Delegation Visit to North Korea”, 19th June-2nd July 1987, 8.

⁹³ Interview with Elder Se-yong Kang, Okryu House Church, 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Concerning the history of Pyongyang Theological Seminary, see, *Jangrohoe Shinhak Daehak Chilsipnyunsa*, (A History of the Presbyterian Theological College and Seminary, 1901-1971), Seoul, Presbyterian Theological College and Seminary Press, 1971; In-soo Kim, *Jangrohoe Shinhak Daehak 100nyunsa*, (A History of the Presbyterian Theological College and Seminary, 1901-2001), Seoul, Presbyterian Theological College and Seminary Press, 2002.

⁹⁶ E. Weingartner, *Op. Cit.*, 20. Since 1999, the course has been extended into a five-year course. The KCF is constructing a new building for the seminary with the financial support of the PCK. See, *The Kookminilbo*, 9th April 2002.

⁹⁷ Chul-hun Kim (age, 36), Kun-sam Paik (35), Sung-ho Kim (44), Hae-yun Hwang (48), Ki-chan Park (41), Bong-il Paik (37), Hung-su Cho (36), Jin-sa Song (50), Young-il Kim (34). Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.* 78.

⁹⁸ Interview with Evangelist Bong-il Paik, 5th April 2001, Pyongyang.

from ten to fifteen new students are enrolled, a new group of students entering when the previous group graduates.⁹⁹

According to Ki-jun Koh, “Students are selected from among those who are engaged in the work of the Central Committee of the KCF or in local KCF committees”¹⁰⁰ He adds that “Officiators (lay leaders) of house churches may also be recommended to attend the seminary”.¹⁰¹ For example, Rev. Si-chon Hwang was trained in the seminary after serving as the secretary of the Pyongyang Provincial Committee of the KCF from 1973-1989.¹⁰² Rev. Byung-chul Ryu led several house churches as a lay leader when he was secretary of North Hwanghae Provincial Committee of the KCF, and he was recommended for training by the house churches.¹⁰³ In Kaesung, there were three house churches and 120 believers in 1987. They asked the KCF to send an ordained pastor who had grown up in Kaesung, but none came from there. Therefore, they expected to send one or two students to the seminary course on their recommendation.¹⁰⁴

The reopening of the seminary fundamentally changed the life of the house churches in North Korea. With the appointment of ordained pastors, the house churches became more stable and active. When the seminary reopened, only ten pastors were left, but as a result of restarting theological education, house churches had more opportunity of having ordained pastors to

⁹⁹ Kyung-seo Park, “North Korea-Background of the Churches” WCC Memorandum, 25th June 1996.

¹⁰⁰ E. Weingartner, *Op. Cit.*, 21.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Curriculum Vitae of Rev. Si-chon Hwang

- Born in 1942
- Address: Dongsung-Dong, Joong-kuyok, Pyongyang
- 1961-1964: BA, Pyongyang Urban Management School
- 1989-1992: BD, Pyongyang Theological Seminary
- 1973-1989: Secretary for Pyongyang Provincial Committee, KCF
- 1992- : Secretary for International Relations, KCF

“The List of Delegations of KCF”, Fax from KCF to National Council of Churches of Japan, 23rd February 1995.

¹⁰³ Curriculum Vitae of Rev. Byung-chul Ryu

- Born in 1941
- Address: Kyunghung 2 Dong, Botongkang-kuyok, Pyongyang
- 1978-1981: BD, Pyongyang Theological Seminary
- 1960-1963: Technical Advisor of Jungbong Collective Farm, Shinky-Kun
- 1963-1978: Secretary for Hwanghaebukdo Provincial Committee, KCF
- 1981-1989: Secretary for the Central Committee of KCF
- 1989- : Minister of Chigol Church

Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ NCCUSA, “Confidential Report of the NCCCUSA Official Delegation Visit to North Korea”, 20-21.

minister to them. By 1989, thirty-seven graduates from the seminary had been ordained, and served in house churches.¹⁰⁵ By 1995, seventy students had graduated from the seminary.¹⁰⁶ According to the report from the KCF to the WCC, fifty-two had been ordained and the others were having pastoral training in their placement in 1997.¹⁰⁷ In this period, the number of Protestant Christians in North Korea doubled.¹⁰⁸

The graduates are ministering to several house churches in urban areas among a total of 511 house churches. However, rural house churches are still being led by lay leaders. Due to the development of the “Social *Diakonia* Mission”,¹⁰⁹ some of the human resources of the KCF are invested in diaconal projects in the central and provincial offices. There are thirty staff members in the central office and fifty in the provincial office, including several ordained ministers.¹¹⁰ Therefore, training pastors is still a priority for the KCF. According to Bong-il Paik, the graduates prefer to work in house churches rather than offices because of the “atmosphere of fellowship in house churches, and their evangelistic zeal”.¹¹¹

The curriculum of the seminary is similar to that of the old seminary before the Korean War: It indicates Biblical Theology, Church History, Systematic Theology, Practical Theology and Religious Philosophy.¹¹² It seems that the training is similar to what used to be given in the old seminary in missionary times as well, sometimes without much change. For example, according to Insik Kim, Rev. Deuk-ryong Kim, who taught Homiletics, used his notes, which he had taken in the class of Homiletics given by Allen Clark by the end of the 1930s.¹¹³ When E. Weingartner asked about the textbooks, Ki-jun Koh, answered, “We use old books that have survived from old seminaries”. Therefore, the KCF often asked for theological textbooks to be sent from outside. For instance, WCC Publications donated more than three hundred

¹⁰⁵ Kyung-seo Park, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁰⁶ Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 77.

¹⁰⁷ “From the Central Committee of KCF to the Asia Desk of WCC”, June 1997. N.B., According Kyung-seo Park, the former Asia secretary of WCC, WCC contributed for the budget of the seminary in this period. Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

¹⁰⁸ In 1984, there were 5,000 Protestant Christians in North Korea. See, J. Moyer et al., “Confidential Report: Notes on a Visit to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea from May 24 to June 10, 1984”, Lutheran World Federation, 4. However, the Christian population increased up to 12,000 by 1996. Kyung-seo Park, “North Korea-Background of Churches”, June 1996, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Concerning the mission, see, Chapter VII.

¹¹⁰ “From the Central Committee of KCF to the Asia Desk of WCC”, June 1997.

¹¹¹ Interview with Evangelist Bong-il Paik, 5th April 2001, Pyongyang.

¹¹² E. Weingartner, *Op. Cit.*, 21.

¹¹³ Interview with Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

theological books, and the Christian Literature Society of Korea sent five hundred books, including commentaries and dictionaries.¹¹⁴ Theological books for the seminary library are among the important items which the KCF asks for, whenever visitors pass through from outside to send.¹¹⁵

The KCF has often expressed strong political opinions against “US imperialism” and the “military dictatorship of South Korea”.¹¹⁶ In this respect, it sounds as if the theology of the seminary could be radical and political. However, although the KCF has an interest in political issues, that does not mean that the theology of the seminary is radical. On the contrary, most specialists on Christianity in North Korea agree that the theological education of the seminary is quite conservative.¹¹⁷ According to Dong-kun Hong, who was a part-time lecturer at the seminary, “theological education of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary preserves the conservative Korean Presbyterian tradition, which was influenced by the American missionaries”.¹¹⁸

Indeed, the theological development of the seminary had been held back, ever since its abolition in 1938. After eight years of non-existence (1938-1945), the seminary reopened for five years (1945-1950), but it closed its doors again for another twenty-two years (1950-1972). In this circumstance, it was difficult for the seminary to develop its own theology. Furthermore, the staff members of the reopened seminary were drawn from among ten surviving pastors, who were educated before 1950. What they taught was based on their own conservative theology, in which they had been trained by the American missionaries.

¹¹⁴ Kyung-seo Park, “North Korea-Background of the Churches”, WCC Memorandum, 25th June 1996.

¹¹⁵ For example, the delegation of the NCCCUSA also presented a number of theological books in Korean, which were offered on behalf of the NCKK, and others in English by the NCCUSA, *Op. Cit.*, 6.

¹¹⁶ For example, from 1974-1981, KCF announced seven statements, which blamed the US annual military training in South Korea, the Team Spirit and the arrest of Christian leaders by the military dictator in South Korea. For the list of the statements, see, IKCH ed., *A History of the Church in North Korea*, 447.

¹¹⁷ The author asked same question on the theological characteristics of the seminary to eight specialists, Prof. Kyung-seo Park, Rev. Young-il Kang, Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, Prof. Syngman Rhee, Rev. Dwain Epps, Rev. Dr. Seong-won Park, Mr. Eric Weingartner and Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong. All interviewees point out the conservative nature of its theology.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles. Hong visited North Korea for six months every year from 1989-2001 from USA to lecture at the Kim Il Sung University and Pyongyang Theological Seminary. He passed away on 11th November 2001 in Pyongyang during his visit for the lectureship.

The theological education in North Korea is still fairly basic. It is not yet equipped to train people as independent researchers. Rather, its main target is ministerial formation, the training of pastors. For the development of North Korean theology, the KCF must consider how to upgrade the quality of its seminary. Already, there is some development in this direction. For instance, from 1999, the seminary extended its course from three-years to five-years.¹¹⁹ Rev. Young-sup Kang said, “the KCF intends to upgrade nominees for ordination to the masters level”.¹²⁰ To improve the quality of lectures, recently the KCF has started to organize visiting lectureships for Korean theologians working in overseas countries.¹²¹ Since the reopening, the Pyongyang Theological Seminary has been the backbone of the revival of Protestant Christianity, by training and providing pastors.¹²²

In addition to the reopening of the seminary, another significant event was the establishment of the Department of Religious Studies at Kim Il Sung University. The university was opened in 1946 by the Provisional People’s Committee of North Korea. Since its establishment, it has been the most prestigious institution of higher education in the North. It is here that the Communist elites of North Korea were educated.¹²³ There have been Units on Buddhism and Islam in the Department of Asian History, and of *Tonghak* in the Department of Korean History.¹²⁴ These units were brought together and the Department of Religious Studies inaugurated in 1987,¹²⁵ but there did not Christianity feature until 1989. In that year, a Unit on

¹¹⁹ In 2002, twelve students are training in the seminary. Remarkably, there are three women students. If they successfully finish the course, they will be ordained in 2005. They will be the first women pastors in the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. Young-sup Kang, “Keynote Speech”, The Eighth Korean Christian Conference for Peaceful Reunification of Fatherland, 23rd June 2002, Tozanso, Unpublished Paper.

¹²⁰ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, the Chairperson of the KCF, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

¹²¹ For example, Syngman Rhee, Dong-kun Hong, Insik Kim and Kyung-seo Park lectured at the seminary during their visits. They visited North Korea more than twenty times.

¹²² The KCF also is constructing new seminary buildings from 2002 to accept more students, with the financial support of the PCK. *The Kidokongbo*, 24th August 2002.

¹²³ Concerning the educational system in North Korea, see, Jiangcheng He, “Educational Reforms”, in Han S. Park, ed, *North Korea: Ideology, Politics, Economy*, 33-50.

¹²⁴ Heung-soo Kim and Dae-young Ryu, “A Study of the Present Situation of Religions in North Korea and Possibility of Religious Exchange between the North and South”, *History of Christianity in Korea*, vol. 16, 2002, 138.

¹²⁵ There are different claims about the year of the inauguration. Chan-young Lee claims 1987 in his book, *Bukhan Kidokyo 100 Myungjangmyun*, (The One Hundred Important Events of Christianity in North Korea), Seoul, Hankichong, 2000, 359. Heung-soo Kim claims 1988, in Heung-soo Kim and Dae-young, *Op. Cit.* Jung-hyun Paik claims 1989, in Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 87. *The Hankookilbo*, 22nd October 1989 reports, “It will be inaugurated in 1990”. However, Tong-chul Choi, who studied there at that time, said in an interview that the department was inaugurated in 1987 in *The Chosunilbo*, 9th October 2000.

Christianity was inaugurated for the first time in university education in North Korea. Dong-kun Hong remembers this as follows:

During my visit to the university in 1989, I had conversations with staff members of the Department of Religious Studies on the dialogue between Christianity and the *Juche* Idea. After the conversation, I was invited for dinner by Prof. Chang-kook Lee, the head of Department. He said, "Dr. Hong, we have decided to inaugurate the Unit of Christianity in our Department, but we have no specialist on Christianity". And, he suggested, "Would you kindly take responsibility for it?" "Already, we have the permission of President Kim." ¹²⁶

Hong accepted the post and inaugurated the Unit of Christianity in 1989, starting lectures from the spring term of 1990.¹²⁷ There were 20 students in the Department and Dr. Hong lectured on Introduction to Christianity, Introduction to Biblical Theology, *Minjung* Theology and Liberation Theology. He also supervised postgraduate students.¹²⁸ According to *The Chosunilbo*, although this department has only recently been established, there is high competition to enter because the KWP has recently recruited a number of specialists on religion.¹²⁹ Especially, the study of Christianity is "the most favorite subject," perhaps because of frequent opportunity to travel to foreign countries for international Christian conferences.¹³⁰ Jung-hyun Paik claims that the graduates of the Unit of Christianity made a useful contribution to the positive reinterpretation of Christianity from a *Juche* perspective during the 1990s.¹³¹

The inauguration of the Unit of Christianity at Kim Il Sung University was another impressive occasion for the Christians of North Korea. Such a thing would have been unimaginable when northern churches started to revive in 1972. However, now the best students in North Korea are eager to learn about Christianity. Furthermore, some of these students, who understand and have sympathy with the Christian faith, later become officials of religious affairs in the government, and some others become researchers on Christianity at the Institute for the *Juche* Idea in the Academy of Social Science in Pyongyang. Unlike China, there was no so-called, the "cultural Christians" in North Korea. However, since the establishment of the Unit of

¹²⁶ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

¹²⁷ For this job, PCUSA appointed Dr. Hong as a missionary to North Korea.

¹²⁸ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

¹²⁹ *The Chosunilbo*, 9th October 2000.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 92-93. The details of the Christian-Juchean dialogue will be examined in Chapter VII.

Christianity at Kim Il Sung University, the possibility of appearing “cultural Christians” in North Korea is increasing, especially among younger intellectuals.

4. Publication of Bible and Hymnbook

When the KCF was studying the situation of house churches, it discovered another urgent demand of the remnant Christians. The Christians were eager to have a new Bible and hymnbook. The Bible and hymnbook had not been printed since the liberation in North Korea. Therefore, the language used was not appropriate in modern Korean. Moreover, even this old version of Bible was not sufficient for the Christians because only a few copies had survived during the Anti-Religious Campaign. Suk-jung Song states his experience in 1982 as follows:

During the worship, we carefully watched the Bible and hymnbook of the members. The covers of most of them were worn out... Some had hand-copied Bibles. However, there were colorful underlinings. They might read several times whole pages of Bible. After the worship, I heard that some hid their Bible in a vat (for *Kimchi*), and used to read it only in the night before the reopening of their (house) church.¹³²

In response to this, the KCF prepared the publication of a new Korean Bible and hymnbook, from the mid-1970s on. The New Testament was published in 1983 and the Old Testament in 1984. In 1984, the complete Bible was brought out and the KCF printed 10,000 copies of it. They also printed 10,000 copies of the new hymnbooks. However, by 1987, none of them were left. The number of Protestant Christians had already reached 10,000. The KCF therefore reprinted the Bible and the hymnbook in 1990.¹³³

At first, the KCF had intended to bring out an entirely new translation, but the leaders soon realized that this would be over ambitious. Therefore, the written Korean of the Bible was modernized, and partly revised through a comparative reading with Hebrew and English Bibles. However, Ki-jun Koh frankly said that many preferred the United Korean Bible, which was jointly translated and published by the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in South Korea, in 1977.¹³⁴ In the preface to the hymnbook, the KCF said the “hymns are taken

¹³² Suk-jung Song, “What I Saw and What I Heard”, in Eun-sik Yang ed., *Bundaneul Tueonumeo*, (Across the Division), Seoul, Jungwonmunhwa, 1988, 222.

¹³³ Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 121.

¹³⁴ Jung-hyun Paik, *Ibid.*, 120.

from the *New Hymnbook*, Department of Education, PCK, 1939, with modernized words".¹³⁵ The hymnbooks in 1990 were printed at the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing, with the support of the United Bible Society (UBS).¹³⁶

Tae-woo Koh again claims that only a few copies of Bible and hymnbook were printed by the KWP for a propaganda purpose.¹³⁷ He asserts that there is a notice that the KWP is the publisher of the Bible.¹³⁸ This is incorrect, and Koh seems to be writing history from a Cold-War perspective. It is clearly stated that the KCF is the publisher, and we have been unable to find any mention of the KWP in the 1983, 1984 and 1990 versions. Moreover, if only few copies were printed for propaganda purposes, it would not have been necessary for the KWP to reprint another 10,000 copies of the hymnbook in China with the financial support of UBS in 1990.

In addition to the reopening of the seminary, the publication of the new Bible and hymnbook were events of symbolic importance for the revival. The Christians donated 2% of their monthly income to the KCF for the publication, and for the Pyongyang Theological Seminary, during this period.¹³⁹ Now, the Christians, who had hidden the Bible in *Kimchi* pots, were free to read the Bible and sing hymns openly. Every Christians was at last able to have a copy of the Bible and hymnbook for themselves. On every Sunday, they rejoiced and worshiped in house churches with their new Bible and hymnbook.¹⁴⁰

5. International Ecumenical Relationships

As J. Hormadka predicted when the WCC Toronto Statement was issued, the ecumenical relationship between the North Korean church and the WCC had been closed since the

¹³⁵ Preface, *Chasongga*, (Hymnbook), Pyongyang, KCF, 1984, 2.

¹³⁶ Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 123-124.

¹³⁷ Tae-woo Koh, *Op. Cit.*, 155-158

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹³⁹ NCCCUSA, "Confidential Report of the NCCCUSA Official Delegation Visit to North and South Korea, 19 June - 2 July 1987", 21.

¹⁴⁰ Still, there is strong doubt in the South whether the Christians in the North have worship in every Sunday. Even Jung-hyun Paik, a moderate researcher, does not believe it. Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 169-176. However, E. Weingartner witnesses that he participated in worship in every Sunday during his stay of three years in North Korea. He used to visit house churches without any prior notice for Sunday service when he traveled through rural villages to monitor the distribution of food. He says, "Whenever I visited the house churches, there were services on Sunday. I think, it is not worthy to respond to the question." Interview with E. Weingartner, 12th April 2001, North Bay, Canada.

Korean War.¹⁴¹ The international ecumenical relationships of the KCF were frustrated by the policies of the Cold War. Especially during the Anti-Religious Campaign period, the North Korean church was completely isolated from the world Christian community. However, the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea brought the revival of its international ecumenical fellowship as well.

The first known contact of the KCF with international ecumenical organizations has been described as follows:

On 2 August 1974, the Korean Christian Federation unexpectedly applied for membership of the World Council of Churches. The purpose of the application was to propagandize the North Korean government as a modern state, which has religious freedom. There was a notorious motive in this application, in order to carry on political propaganda amongst international Christian organizations. However, the WCC rejected the application because the WCC became aware of this intention. The WCC replied that the application was difficult to accept because it was difficult to know the situation and membership of the churches in North Korea.¹⁴²

S. Masahiko also claims that this application was merely a “disguising tactic” of North Korea.¹⁴³ However, this claim is based on a secondary South Korean source, an article in *Bukhan*, (North Korea).¹⁴⁴ It is not based on primary sources either from the WCC or from the KCF.

In fact, the beginning of the recovery of the relationship between the KCF and the WCC originated in a supportive telegram sent by E. C. Blake, the general secretary of the WCC, to the respective presidents of the two Koreas on 4th July 1972. Blake hoped the goal of reunification would be quickly realized through the North and South Dialogue.¹⁴⁵ As a response, the KCF sent a letter through the North Korean Office of Permanent Observer to the

¹⁴¹ “From Hromádka to Visser’t Hooft”, 30th November 1950. The ecumenical relationship of the Chinese church also closed because of this statement. See, P. L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China’s United Front*, 227-229.

¹⁴² Kyung-bae Min, *Church and Minjok*, 446.

¹⁴³ S. Masahiko, *Nambukhan Kidokyo Saron*, (A Historiography of Christianity in North and South Korea), 205.

¹⁴⁴ See, Hae-moon Choi, “The Religious Situation and the Political Strategies against South Korea of North Korea”, *Bukhan*, (North Korea), vol. 4, 1975, 8-12. Choi quoted from the report of KCIA, not WCC.

¹⁴⁵ “From E. Carson to President J. Park” and “From E. Carson to President I. Kim”, telegram, 4th July 1972.

United Nations at Geneva.¹⁴⁶ In this letter, the KCF expressed thanks for supporting the reunification talks, and called for the WCC to show concern over the military junta in South Korea.¹⁴⁷ With delivery of the letter, the counselor of the Office asked for information about applying for membership of the WCC.¹⁴⁸ There was neither a formal application on the part of the KCF nor a rejection of such an application by the WCC in 1974. Rather, P. Potter, the new general secretary of WCC, sent a letter to KCF as follows:

We are very happy to learn that a representative of your organization participated in the Asian Christian Peace Conference held in India recently. We would very much appreciate having the opportunity for more information about the life and witness of the churches in your country and for direct contacts with you, and with churches and Christian groups there... We shall also be happy to explore the possibility of a visit by representatives of some member churches of the WCC to your country to establish contacts (which) will be mutually enriching and will strengthen the ties that already united us in Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁹

In spite of this intention, nothing more than initial contact between the two organizations took place during the 1970s because the KCF still did not have full confidence in the WCC because of the WCC's earlier support for the US police action during the Korean War. Instead, the KCF preferred to participate actively in an organization called the Christian Peace Conference (CPC). Delegates of the KCF took part in the Asian Christian Peace Conference (ACPC), 9th-14th January 1975, Kottayam, India. It was the first international conference in which the KCF participated after the revival.¹⁵⁰ From the next year, the KCF also began to participate in the international CPC. In 1976, it participated in the meeting of the Commission of Economy and Politics of the CPC, 24th-28th October, at Brno, in Czechoslovakia.¹⁵¹ After joining several commissions, the KCF was also invited as an observer to the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly, 2nd-9th July 1985, Prague, and obtained full membership of the

¹⁴⁶ Tai-keun Djeung, the counselor, and Il-bu Pak, the second secretary, delivered the letter to WCC. "Confidential CCIA file, North Korea: Visit of July 5, Friday, 1974", 6.

¹⁴⁷ "From the Central Committee of Korean Christian Federation to Rev. Eugene Carson", 2nd February 1974. There was no response from South Korea.

¹⁴⁸ Sang-jung Park, *Geneva eseo Seoul kkagi*, (From Geneva to Seoul), Seoul, Saenuri Shinmoonsa, 1995, 41.

¹⁴⁹ "From Philip Potter to the Korean Christian Federation", 28th February 1975.

¹⁵⁰ There were four delegates from the KCF, Song-ryul Kim, general secretary of KCF, Song-ik Ho, Guang-il Kum, Song-za Jong, at the ACPC in India. The APCP adopted the Resolution on Korea, expressed alarm at the "suppression of the South Korean people as they struggled against to Fascist regime." *Asian Christian Peace Conference*, 9th-14th January 1975, Kottayam, India, 82; 72.

¹⁵¹ G. Wirth, *A History of the Christian Peace Conference*, Prague, CPC 1989, 209. Concerning the meeting, see, *CPC Information*, No. 207, 1975.

CPC there.¹⁵² There were several other exchange visits between the KCF and the CPC during this period.¹⁵³

Within the CPC, the KCF expressed a strong political voice on the issue of Korean reunification. For example, the ACPC in Kottayam and the CPC Assembly strongly supported the North Korean reunification policy, by adopting a Resolution on Korea.¹⁵⁴ When we recall the criticism of Hromádka, the founder of the CPC, had made of the WCC's Toronto Statement, the CPC's support for North Korea on the reunification issue was understandable. The KCF also favored the CPC and found itself at home there because the churches from Communist countries were the mainstream of the CPC. However, it was a dilemma for the KCF when the CPC became less active in the mid-1980s.

The CPC nevertheless played a role of reconciliation between the KCF and the WCC. The CPC leaders informed the KCF of the changes that had taken place in the WCC after the rise of the notion of the social gospel at the 1968 Uppsala Assembly, and encouraged the KCF to take more interest in the WCC.¹⁵⁵ In 1981, the KCF then sent a letter to the WCC, and again informally asked for information on membership of the WCC,¹⁵⁶ Heung-soo Kim claims that this application was rejected once more by the central committee of the WCC because the WCC had no confidence in the existence of Christians in North Korea, and also had some doubts about the political purpose of the application.¹⁵⁷ However, Kyung-seo Park, who was in the WCC when the WCC discussed the possibility of the KCF's membership, states the following:

As you may know, even to be an associate member of WCC, the membership of church must be over 45,000 by the law. Therefore, the KCF was not able to be considered as a member church of the WCC. The WCC did not reject the KCF because of her political intention, but simply on the number of membership. How could we know their real intention? Moreover, it was highly important for the WCC to restore ecumenical relationship with the Christians in North Korea. Therefore, the

¹⁵² There were Chul Lee, Young-chul Lee, Byung-chul U and Hye-suk Kim. *Sixth All-Christian Assembly*, Praha, CPC, 1985, X.

¹⁵³ For example, Rev. Dr. L. Mirejovsky, general secretary of CPC, and Metropolitan Dr. Filaret of Kiev and Galicia visited KCF from 19-23 September 1986. *CPC Information*, No. 373, 1986, 3-4.

¹⁵⁴ See, *Asian Christian Peace Conference*, 72; *Sixth All-Christian Assembly*, 376.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

¹⁵⁶ "From Sung-ryul Kim to WCC", January, 1981.

¹⁵⁷ Heung-soo Kim, *A History of the Churches in North Korea After Liberation*, 6.

WCC sent Eric Weingartner and Victor Hsu to Pyongyang in order to study Christianity in North Korea.¹⁵⁸

It is possible that the KCF was approaching the WCC with some political purpose. However, WCC did not reject the KCF, but explored new possibilities of establishing a relationship. South Korean historians misunderstood what happened because it was the North Korean diplomatic office in Geneva that delivered the letters from the KCF to the WCC. However, E. Weingartner,¹⁵⁹ who encouraged the reestablishment of the relationship between the KCF and the WCC, says that, originally, the contact between the two organizations was mediated by the CPC:

Question: How did you first have contact with the KCF?

Answer: We had some contacts with pastors, who had gone through Pyongyang. And, mostly the ones who came to me were not Korean pastors. They were westerners. So there were some who were people who worked and were involved in the CPC, and with other relations to eastern Europe and so on. Some of them were in church structures and others completely on their own, individuals...you know, individual...kind of interest from USA, from Australia, some German pastors also. So we got some information from their reports and listening from them about how things are functioning about KCF, about house churches and so on. And actually first contact directly I had with KCF was in Prague for CPC conference (at the commission of International Secretariat, CPC, 26-30 January 1981), not through the North Korean UN Office in Geneva. Not initially, we approached the embassy only when we were beginning officially at the Tozanso in 1984...Even before me Ninan Koshy, the director of CCIA, met KCF people through CPC...Basically even this first contact didn't lead to anything during the 1970s because from WCC side, as you know, we were forbidden to have relations with North Korea by the member churches in South Korea. They simply said, "No way", because it's too dangerous for them in South Korea. So, that's why we started to think in terms of when is the good moment of transition in that kind of thinking.¹⁶⁰

This interview proves that North Korean diplomats did not approach the WCC first, but rather the CCIA informally contacted the KCF through the CPC to reestablish the ecumenical relationship during the 1970s. However, the South Korean member churches of the WCC did not want it. Therefore, it was not possible for the WCC to develop further the relationship

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

¹⁵⁹ Eric Weingartner was Executive Secretary of the WCC-CCIA from 1978-1986. He first visited North Korea within the WCC in 1984. He launched the WCC Tozanso process and Glion meetings, which mediated reconciliation between North and South Korean Christians. Later, he became the head of the UN Office in Pyongyang.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Mr. E. Weingartner, 12 April 2001, North Bay, Canada; See also, E. Weingartner, "A Chronicle of the Dialogue between Christians in North and South Korea", *Peace Office Newsletter*, vol. 30, No. 3, 2000.

with the KCF.¹⁶¹ The claims which assert that the KCF approached the WCC politically through the North Korean UN Office, seem like a copy of the report by the South Korean intelligence agency.¹⁶² The North Korean UN Office merely delivered the letters from the KCF to the WCC.

Paradoxically, the South Korean member churches prevented the WCC from approaching the KCF during the 1970s, but it was also the South Korean church which asked the WCC to contact the KCF for reconciliation of Korea during the 1980s. In 1979, President Park was assassinated by Jae-kyu Kim, the head of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency. The South Korean people expected a civil government to take over, through a democratic election. However, General Doo-hwan Chun became President through a military coup on 12th December 1979. There were nationwide demonstrations against Chun's coup. However, Chun suppressed the people's demonstrations by killing about one thousand people in Kwangju. A number of democracy movement leaders, including Christian pastors and theologians, were accused of being spies for North Korea in relation to Kwangju uprising, and some of them were sentenced to death in the military court.¹⁶³ Progressive Christians in South Korea now realized that the issue of democracy could not be separated from the issue of reunification, because Chun justified his suppression of democracy on the grounds that it was necessary to counteract the threat of Red North Korea.¹⁶⁴ Finally, the NCKC asked the WCC to help

¹⁶¹ E. Wengartner also states, "Stories about the existence of a worshipping community in the DPRK were met with extreme skepticism. Expatriate Korean Christians and pastors who visited North Korea were regarded as dupes of Communism. One such pastor visited my office at the WCC and offered to write a report of his visit to the North. I gratefully, if naively, accepted. Swift and emotional reactions caught me by surprise. South Korean ecumenical friends accused me of conspiracy and collaboration with the enemy. I learned quickly that even the smallest step taken by the WCC with regard to North Korea implicated nervous South Korean member churches and therefore required intimate dialogue and acquiescence". E. Weingartner, "The Tozanso Process: Ecumenical Efforts for Korean reconciliation and Reunification", in G. Baum and H. Wells ed., *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenges to the Churches*, Geneva, WCC, 1997, 70.

¹⁶² *The Naewei Tongshin* (内外通信), the news agency of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency, was only allowed to produce information on North Korea during the military dictatorship period in South Korea. Most historians quoted it, but it is not a primary source for writing a history of the churches in North Korea in this period. For representative examples, see the quotations of Kyung-bae Min in *Church and Minjok*, 417-450.

¹⁶³ For example, President Kim Dae-jung, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, 2000, was sentenced to death, and Rev. Prof. Ik-hwan Moon was sentenced to twenty years in prison. Prof. Wan-sang Han, Rev. Prof. Nam-dong Seo, Rev. Prof. Byug-moo Ahn, Prof. Moon-young Lee and Rev. Hae-dong Lee, the *minjung* theologians, were sentenced to ten years.

¹⁶⁴ See, Working Group on Peace, "Realities in the Divided Korea: Challenges for the Churches", *Peace and Justice in North East Asia: Prospects for Peaceful Resolution of Conflict*, Geneva, WCC-CCIA, 1985, 59-65. In fact, this document was the NCKC's. However, it was announced under the disguised name of Working Group on Peace to avoid the oppression of the military dictator.

mediate a meeting between the North and the South churches, to discuss the issue of reunification, in 1982.¹⁶⁵

The WCC, which had been waiting for “the moment of transition”, began to move quickly. Two executive secretaries of the CCIA, E. Weingartner and V. Hsu, secretly contacted the KCF, and suggested a direct meeting between the northern and southern Christians for reconciliation.¹⁶⁶ They came back with news of active Christian life in house churches in North Korea. Furthermore, the KCF accepted the WCC’s invitation to meet the church leaders from South Korea at the CCIA conference on Peace and Justice in North-East Asia, 29th October-3rd November, Tozanso, Japan, which was especially organized to discuss the issue of Korean reunification.¹⁶⁷ Not only to reduce the political burden, but also to recognize that the division of Korea has been a key issue for security of North-East Asia, the title and participants were expanded.¹⁶⁸

Unfortunately, the KCF was not finally able to take part in the Tozanso conference, but they sent a message of greetings and encouragement.¹⁶⁹ The KCF promised their participation in any future ecumenical initiatives on Korean reunification. In spite of the absence of KCF, the Tozanso conference made a historic resolution on Korea, the so-called Tozanso Process,¹⁷⁰ which it recommended to the global ecumenical family:

¹⁶⁵ E. Weingartner, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁶⁶ E. Weingartner, *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Concerning the Tozanso meeting, see, CCIA ed, *Peace and Justice in North East Asia: Prospects for Peaceful Resolution of Conflict*, Geneva, WCC-CCIA, 1985; E. Weingartner, “The Tozanso Process: An Ecumenical contribution to the Struggle for Peace and Justice in North-East Asia”, *Peace And Reunification of Korea*, Geneva, WCC-CCIA, 1990, 12-28; E. Salter, “The Tozanso Process: Reflections on an Ecumenical Adventure”, *Ibid.*, 48-50; M. Kang, “Reflections on the Tozanso Process and Plans for the Jubilee”, Unpublished paper, The Third Glion Meeting, 2-5 December 1990, Glion, Switzerland.

¹⁶⁸ In fact, the Tozanso Conference was prepared through two informal meetings, the strategy meeting on Korean Reunification between the CCIA and the NCKK from 21st-22nd June 1982, Los Angeles, and the ad hoc meeting in July 1983, Tokyo. It is worthwhile to list the pioneers of this new stage of history here: Ninan Koshy, Eric Weingartner, Victor Hsu, Sang-jung Park, Moon-kyu Kang, Kwang-sun Suh, Myung-gul Son, Myung-kwan Chi, Kwan-suk Kim, etc. Concerning the two meetings, see, “CCIA-Korean Reunification Meeting”, 21st-22nd June 1982, manuscript, and “Aide Memoire” Ad hoc meeting of the NETWORK in July 1983, manuscript.

¹⁶⁹ “The Central Committee of the Korean Christian Federation extends warm congratulations to the International Conference for Peace and justice in North-east Asia and through the Conference to the representatives. We believe that the Conference will make every effort to realize peace and justice in this region, particularly peaceful reunification of Korea focusing attention upon the urgent situation of North-East Asia...” “From the Central Committee of the KCF to International Christian Conference for Peace and Justice in North East Asia”, Telegram, 25th October 1984.

¹⁷⁰ This will be argued in detail in next chapter.

8.2.1. The WCC be asked to explore, in collaboration with CCA, the possibility of developing relationships with churches, Christians and others in North Korea, through visits and forms of contact.

8.2.2. The WCC, in collaboration with CCA, should seek to facilitate opportunities where it would be possible for Christians from both North and South Korea to meet in dialogue.

8.2.3. The churches be encouraged to share with the WCC and the CCA plans for contacts with and results of visit to North Korea.¹⁷¹

Although the KCF was not even in the category of an associate member of WCC, an official resolution had now been established allowing and encouraging the WCC to develop its relationship with the KCF. In 1985, the first official visit from the WCC to North Korea was carried on from 10th-19th November.¹⁷² During the visit, N. Koshy and E. Weingartner worshiped in house churches, and had a conference with the KCF leaders. In this conference, the CCIA suggested a direct meeting between the North and South Korean churches under WCC auspices, on the basis of Tozanso recommendations. The KCF welcomed this proposal. They also asked for the cooperation of North Korean government in this direct meeting between North and South Korean churches when they were received by President Kim Il-sung.¹⁷³ Finally, for the first time since the partition of Korea, the official representatives of the KCF and the NCCCK met at Glion, 2nd-5th September 1986, for the reconciliation of the churches, and for the reunification of nation.¹⁷⁴ The KCF also participated in the WCC Central Committee meeting in Moscow, 1989, and the General Assembly meeting in Canberra, 1991. K. Reiser, the general secretary of WCC visited North Korea in 1995, and the KCF has been sending a delegation to the WCC almost every year since 1985.

Furthermore, based on the Tozanso resolution, not only the WCC, but also other confessional, regional, and national ecumenical organizations such as the LWF, WARC, CCA, NCCCK, NCCJ, NCCCUSA, EKD,¹⁷⁵ and denominations in South Korea, USA, Canada, Australia,

¹⁷¹ "Findings and Recommendations", CCIA/WCC Consultation on Peace and Justice in North East Asia, 29th October-2nd November 1984, Tozanso, Japan.

¹⁷² The Invitation was jointly signed by the Central Committee of KCF and Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland. Therefore, the schedule of delegates was divided as two parts, visiting churches and government offices. See, E. Weingartner, "The Tozanso Process", 17.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 16-22.

¹⁷⁴ The Glion meeting will be argued in detail next chapter.

¹⁷⁵ i.e., Lutheran World Federation (LWF), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), National Council of Churches in Japan (NCCJ), National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA), and *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD)

Germany and Japan, which have historical links with the North Korean church, have developed close relationships with the KCF.¹⁷⁶ Among these contacts, the KCF's visit to the CCC in May 1985, which followed P. Potter's visit to Nanjing, was particularly noteworthy.¹⁷⁷ During the visit, they studied the Three Self Patriotic Movement, the houses churches in China, and Bishop Ting's idea on the Amity Foundation.¹⁷⁸ This was an opportunity for the KCF to benefit from referring their ecclesiastical development to another church living in an Asian Communist context.

The revival of Christianity in North Korea brought the development of an international ecumenical relationship. On the other hand, the international ecumenical fellowship also contributed to the revival of the KCF. Firstly, this ecumenical relationship brought the KCF an upgrade in its political status. According to Kyung-seo Park, the KCF, which was a small religious organization, had not been well known even in Pyongyang society before the WCC's Tozanso process. However, after Tozanso, the diplomatically isolated North Korean government began to notice the potential of the KCF as a possible non-governmental diplomatic channel to the western world.¹⁷⁹ In this context, the government gave financial support to the construction of the Bong-su and Chilgol churches. Moreover, Rev. Ki-jun Koh, General Secretary of the KCF, was appointed as a member of the committee of foreign affairs, SPA, in 1990.¹⁸⁰

Secondly, the KCF also had financial support for the revival from the WCC. For example, the Asia Desk of the WCC provided financial support of between 20,000 and 100,000 US annually for Pyongyang Theological Seminary and for house church pastors from 1988 onwards.¹⁸¹ The WCC also did not forget to support the wider community of North Korean society, which helped the reputation of KCF, even before the famine. The WCC thus supported several long-term development projects in North Korea. For instance, from 1989-1993, it developed an agricultural project, involving a community outreach program, in collaboration with Wonsan Agricultural College.¹⁸² When the successful results of this project

¹⁷⁶ This will also be stated in detail in next chapter.

¹⁷⁷ E. Weingartner, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Dr. Han Wen Zao, the Chairperson of CCC, 19th March 1999, Nanjing, China.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Kyung-seo Park, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

¹⁸⁰ Jung-hyun Paik, *Op. Cit.*, 280.

¹⁸¹ "From the Central Committee of KCF to the Asia Desk of WCC", June 1997.

¹⁸² For details, see, Kyung-seo Park, "WCC Cooperation with North Korea", Memo, 25th January 1996.

were reported to Kim Il-sung, he invited the WCC delegation to the presidential palace and expressed his appreciation to them.¹⁸³ On this occasion, which took place in 1992, he also invited the KCF leaders to the presidential house, and directly encouraged the activity of the KCF for the first time in its history.¹⁸⁴ Kim's encouragement made a big impression on the Christians of North Korea. Now, Protestant Christianity became a religion which the "great leader" officially admired. Indeed, the ecumenical solidarity of the world church with the KCF contributed greatly to the revival of the northern churches.

However, beyond the political contributions, one of most remarkable contributions of WCC to the revival of the KCF and the house churches was its pastoral visits. The WCC and other ecumenical organizations made continuous team visits to the KCF and the house churches, based on the Tozanso resolution from 1984 onwards. The Christians, who had continued to keep their faith, in spite of the social discrimination leveled against them and without any contact with the outside world for three decades, suffered greatly from a feeling of isolation. For the grassroots Christians, the pastoral visits on the WCC were a bigger encouragement than the financial support. Most reports of the ecumenical team visit describe the tearful reception they got when meeting with the grassroots Christians. For the suffering *minjung*, togetherness was the best pastoral care. The reestablishment of relations with the WCC contributed to the revival of the KCF not only at an institutional level, but also, more importantly, at the level of ordinary people, through direct pastoral contact with the Christians in the house churches.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Interview with Kyung-seo Park.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ The impromptu poem of Un-bong Kim, a house church pastor, well expresses the house church Christians' impression of the ecumenical movement as expressed in the WCC:

Glory to the Boat of Cross

When the Hitler's med-storm covered heaven and earth,
a boat constructed in the midst of a dark cave.
It was the boat of salvation, it set up high the canvas of the Cross.
It was the ark of Noah.
It was the salvation boat for the whole *oikoumene*, the boat of WCC!
.....

Let us go aboard, whole people, all believers together.
Glorious final harbor is in our eyes.
Loading the fruits of love, peace and reconciliation,
the boat comes with the blessing of all peoples.
Let us embrace with one heart and one soul.

6. Rev. Yang-uk Kang and the Revival

One of most significant changes for the Protestant Christians in North Korea in 1972 was that Rev. Yang-uk Kang, the chairperson of the KCF, was elected as the Vice-President of North Korea, at the fifth SPA.¹⁸⁶ Yang-uk Kang (1904-1983) had been the teacher of Kim Il-sung at the Chanduk Christian Primary School, and had influenced the formation of Kim's nationalism.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, Kang was the secondary maternal grandfather of Kim. When Kim came back from Russia, Kang, who was a famous preacher in the northern churches, supported Kim's socialist reform, and was elected as secretary general of the first SPA. He had also been at the forefront of organizing the NKCA for the renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea.¹⁸⁸

Although Kang was in a higher political position, it seems that even he was not able to openly support the revival of the northern churches during the Anti-Religious Campaign period (1958-1971). It is difficult to define his activity in relation to Protestant Christianity in North Korea in this period. He seems to have worked mostly, if not wholly in the arena of politics, because of the anti-Christian atmosphere. However, when he became the second highest person in North Korea, he started to take a leading part in the revival of Protestant Christianity. According to Rev. Choon-ku Lee, Rev. Kang called and greatly influenced the central committee meeting of the KCF in 1972. It was this meeting that made three important decisions for the revival initiative:

But, the boat is still on the sea.
Let us gear up for an unfinished journey uniting together in Christ.
Blow away fire-cloud of war!
Break boundary of divisions!

When we drop our anchor,
all people will bless the boat of the Cross, the boat of *oikoumene*!
Glory, glory, glory forever to the righteous voyage of the WCC!

Un-bong Kim, "Let Us Become One in Jesus Christ", manuscript of sermon on 23rd November 1988, Ecumenical Center, Geneva.

¹⁸⁶ Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 96.

¹⁸⁷ See, Kim Il-sung, *Seki wa dubuleo*, (With a Century: Kim Il-sung's Autobiography), vol. 5, 377-379.

¹⁸⁸ Concerning Rev. Kang, See, Chapter III, Section 4.

Firstly, the central committee decided to reopen the Pyongyang Theological Seminary. Secondly, the committee appealed to the individual Protestant Christians to register with the KCF in order that the KCF could protect them, and ensure their freedom of worship.

Thirdly, the committee decided to reconstruct the ecclesiastical order of the KCF.¹⁸⁹

These were remarkable resolutions, which brought about the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. The KCF, which had just passed through the “fire-kiln of suffering”, now dared to start to expose the presence of Christians in North Korean society. Lee remembers, “Without Kang’s leadership, it would not have been possible for to be declared”.¹⁹⁰ The KCF was also able to get through permission for reopening the Pyongyang Theological Seminary from the government, through the support and influence of Kang.

Rev. Young-il Kang, the general secretary of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, also agrees that “Yang-uk Kang’s contribution for the revival was remarkable”.¹⁹¹ According to him, Yang-uk Kang wanted to hand over his chairmanship of the KCF to Rev. Sung-ryul Kim during the 1970s because of his health problems, but the Central Committee urged him to retain his post. The presence of the Vice-President of the country as the chairperson of the KCF was highly significant for the protection of the Christians. Young-il Kang also claims that the only people who were politically safe enough to be able to give open support the Christians, even in the changed context of 1972, were Kim Il-sung’s relatives. “The Christian family of Kim’s mother, Kangs from Chilgol town, often lobbied, advocated and spoke up for the Christians.”¹⁹²

From a *minjung* perspective, the emphasis in writing history should be on the contribution of people themselves, rather than that of individuals.¹⁹³ In this outlook, the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea was possible because the Christian *minjung* continued to worship together in house churches, in spite of social discrimination and persecution. However, it must be also recorded that Rev. Yang-uk Kang, who loved the Christian *minjung*, was the one who called the scattered Christian leaders, and suggested that they discuss how Protestant

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Interview with Rev. Young-il Kang, 5th December 2000, Seoul.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ According to Yong-bock Kim, the *minjung* are the subject of social history, and their story is viewed as the center of history in *minjung* theology. “Theology and Social Biography of the Minjung”, *CTC Bulletin*, vol. 5, No.3, 1984, 67.

Christianity in North Korea could revive, in the changed context.¹⁹⁴ Although Kang was a politician, he continued his ministry as the chairperson of the KCF until his death. Rev. Young-sup Kang, Yang-uk Kang's son, who survived an assassination attempt in 1946, remembers that "in his later years, my father was happy to see the revival of house churches and the seminary."¹⁹⁵ It should be remembered that in the revival of Christianity in North Korea, there was a politician and pastor, who protected the Christians, using his political influence.

Despite Yang-uk Kang's contribution to the revival, in the South historians bitterly criticize both his leadership and the revival itself. For example, Kyung-bae Min claims that the revived KCF was hurriedly constructed by the KWP for political propaganda purposes, during the North-South Dialogue. He went on further to claim that the KCF only consisted of the central structure led by Kang, with neither member churches nor Christians.¹⁹⁶

It might indeed be possible that when the KWP allowed the revival of the KCF, they had some propaganda purposes in mind. However, if there had been no house churches and Christians, it would not have been necessary for the Communists to allow the revival. Furthermore, if there were no congregations and no Christians, it is difficult to explain why the revival began with the reopening of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary.

Tae-woo Koh, Wan-sin Park and Kwang-soo Kim also criticize the role of Kang, making the same assumptions as Min. They claim that Kang had an order to reopen the central office of the KCF as a "bogus organization," the real purpose of which would be to win the progressive South Korean Christians for the work of the United Front.¹⁹⁷ However, on the contrary, according to Jung-hyun Paik, Rev. Kang, accompanied by Rev. Deuk-ryong Kim, the general secretary of the KCF, went to meet the officials of department of education in order to get support for the permission of reopening the seminary on his own initiative, and by his own free will.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

¹⁹⁶ Kyung-bae Min, *Op. Cit.*, 445.

¹⁹⁷ Tae-woo Koh, *Bukhan eui Jonkyo Jungchaek*, (The Religious Policy in North Korea), 218-223; Wan-sin Park, *Bukhan Jongkyo wa Sunkyo Tongilron*, (Mission, Reunification and Religion in North Korea), 149-150; Kwang-soo Kim, *A History for Christianity in Northern Korea*, 279-281.

¹⁹⁸ Jung-hyun Paik, *Are There Churches in North Korea?*, 77.

Those Southerners who try to discredit Kang and the KCF developed their claims on the basis of a hypothesis that there was no real church in 1972 in North Korea.¹⁹⁹ This hypothesis was established with evidence described from Yang-uk Kang's interview with a South Korean correspondent during the North-South Dialogue in 1972:

Correspondent: Could you tell me the situation of Christianity in North Korea?

Kang: During the three years of the American imperialist's invasion, all church buildings were destroyed by the US bombing. When the American missionaries came up to the North for the pacification work, they said 'opposing USA is opposing God'. It was a tactic to submit the North Korean people to the USA. These American missionaries tried to propagate Christianity, but they justified the bombing of the churches as well. I recognize that the American missionaries did a lot of work for mission in the North. However, at the same time, they failed their mission as well.

.....

C: As I know it, you are a pastor. Aren't you? Could you tell me something about your faith at present?

K: My faith is the same as it was.

C: Do you believe in the existence of God?

K: How could I not believe it as a pastor!

.....

C: How do you distribute the Bible?

K: There is no one who is willing to have the Bible because we have no Christians!²⁰⁰

Since 1972, the last sentence of this interview has often been quoted, as providing crucial evidence of the claims that there was no real church in North Korea. However, *The Pyongyang Shinmoon* on 27th June 1987, a North Korean source, reported a different story of this interview in an article which was a tribute to Yang-uk Kang, as follows:

It was 1972 when the North-South Dialogue was in Pyongyang. A correspondent from South Korea visited Rev. Kang and asked, "Rev. Kang, do you believe in God?" This question must be implied as criticizing the religious policy of the Republic, based on the correspondent's bias, because although he called Kang "the Reverend," but he also asked whether the Reverend believed in God or not. Rev. Kang humbly answered, "You call me Reverend, why do you ask such a question?" The face of the correspondent became red, but tried to trump up charges on the slightest pretext. He asked another stupid question whether there was a church in the North. Finally, Rev. Kang became upset and answered, "There had been churches in the North, but the Americans bombed and destroyed them all during the war".²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ As representative case, see, Jai-keum Choi, "Christian and Anti-Christian Movement in North Korea, 1945-1980", *Yonsei Journal of Theology*, vol.5, 2000, 363-397.

²⁰⁰ Quoted from, Heung-soo Kim ed., *A History of the Church in North Korea after Liberation*, 507-508.

²⁰¹ *The Pyongyang Shinmoon*, 27th June 1987.

When we read the above two quotations together, we can see that Rev. Kang must have answered, “There are no Christians” in order to close the interview. The correspondent already had his own answer, from a prejudice that there was neither church nor Christian in the North. Then, he expected the same answer from Kang. The questions were, undiplomatic, and impolite to someone who was a pastor, as well as to the Vice-President of a country. Finally, Kang became angry because the correspondent did not treat him as a real pastor, and did not believe in the existence of Christians in the North.

The claim that Rev. Kang revived the KCF merely as “bogus organization,” on an order from the KWP, is a statement made under the influence of Cold War ideology. The truth is that the North Korean Christian leaders first met together, after the Anti-Religious Campaign period, in 1972, at the suggestion of Rev. Kang, and they decided upon the reopening the house churches and Pyongyang Theological Seminary. In this process, Kang played a vital role in safeguarding the Christians. Kang’s political position in North Korea was much higher than that of someone who could be sent to lead merely “bogus” organizations. When the delegation of the LWF visited North Korea several months after Kang’s death, Oo-jong Kim, the vice-chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland (CPRF), remembered:

This person remained Christian and a priest all of his life. When he died the Great Leader (Kim Il-sung) and the Dear Leader (Kim Jong-il) visited his family and expressed a great deal of sadness. All of the people in the country were sad.²⁰²

Although Rev. Kang was not a theologian like Y. T. Wu and K. H. Ting in China, he also committed himself for the revival of Protestant Christianity in North Korea as a politician and a pastor. Dong-kun Hong remembers that Kang said on his sickbed, just before his death, “We must reconstruct our churches, but we must believe in the God of Korea, not the God of America!”²⁰³ Rev. Kang wanted the revival of the church in North Korea as a church “of” Korean *minjok* (suffering nation) and a church “for” the Korean *minjung* (suffering people). Kang passed away in 1983, just before the historic Tozanso conference.

²⁰² J. Moyer et al., “Confidential Report: Notes on a Visit to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea from May 24 to June 10, 1984”, Lutheran World Federation, 22.

²⁰³ This idea was very like to what Kim Il-sung’s father had told him when Kim was still a boy. In fact, Kang and Kim Hyung-jik shared this idea as friends and relatives. Dong-kunHong, *Miwan eui Kuihyangilki*, (Uncompleted Diary of Homecoming), vol. 2, 230.

In this chapter, we have examined the revival that took place in Protestant Christianity in North Korea since 1972. After the long winter of the Anti-Religious Campaign, the context of the Protestant church in North Korea gradually changed, allowing this revival. We have seen that the KCF bureaucracy led the external development of the revival. It did so by establishing the Platform for cooperation with the state, developing leadership institutions for the churches, providing a new translation of the Bible and hymnbook, instituting a system of registration, and engaging in North and South dialogue with the assistance of WCC. The institutional efforts of the KCF as the vehicle of revival of post-1972 Christianity in North Korea were successful. However, before 1988, it seems that the revival was focused on quantitative growth rather than qualitative development.

At the same time, this external structure was based not on a hierarchic, corporate model of institutional authority, but on the “congregational” principle of house churches. It is the house churches that evidence the actual growth in the numbers of North Korean Christians, reaching 10,000 by 1988. In the relationship between the church (KCF)-axis and community (house church)-axis, up to 1988 there is no evidence of any tension between them. Both the KCF and the house churches also seem to inter-relate harmoniously in relation to the state-axis during this period.

Chapter VII

Dialogue and *Diakonia*:

The *Minjung* Centered Renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, 1988-1994

After the revival from 1972-1988, there emerged another paradigm in the development of Protestant Christianity in North Korea from 1988 onwards. While the “revival” had been a matter of external development and quantitative growth, the “renewal” would be an internal reference, denoting the theological and diaconal identity of North Korean Protestantism. It will be argued that the revival of northern Protestantism was not only an institutional revival along the church-axis, but also a theological and missiological renewal along the *minjung*-axis. It will be also argued that the renewal was not essentially a compromise with the Communist context. Rather, it was an authentic effort to gain a theological identity through the dialogue with the *Jucheans*, and through becoming a church for the *minjung* by means of diaconal mission in the new socio-economic context after 1988. At the same time as the renewal of the North Korean churches was taking place, a renewal of the way the South Korean and world churches were approaching the North Korean issue was also occurring. This renewed approach from the South and elsewhere made an external contribution to the renewal of Christianity in North Korea, and it too will be studied.

1. The Suffering *Minjung*: The Context of North Korea from 1988-1994

1.1 The Rise of Kim Jong-il

The politics of North Korea during the 1980s can be characterized by the rise of Kim Jong-il, the eldest son of Kim Il-sung, as the successor of the “Great Leader”.²⁰⁴ Kim Il-sung became seventy, the retiring age in Korea, when the seventh SPA was convened in April 1982. Nevertheless, on 5th April, Kim Il-sung was re-elected president of the Republic for a further four-year term.²⁰⁵ There were great celebrations for Kim’s election and seventieth birthday on

²⁰⁴ For details of the political changes during this period, see, Byung-chul Koh, “Political Change in North Korea”, in C. Lee and S. Yoo ed., *North Korea in Transition*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, 1-16; “Political Succession in North Korea: Problems and Prospects”, Paper presented at Research Institute for Unification Conference, Seoul, October 1991; S. R. Yu, “Political Succession in North Korea”, *Korea and World Affairs*, vol. 6, 1982, 565-594.

²⁰⁵ He was elected for four years, but there was no restriction on the re-election. See, *The Socialist Constitution*, Article 90.

15th April 1982.²⁰⁶ However, throughout the 1980s it became obvious that Kim had gradually turned over the affairs of the state, and the party, to his son. While his political power was never challenged, a new generation of North Korean politics had emerged, and Kim's old partisan comrades from guerilla days were dying off. For example, two of three Vice-Presidents of North Korea from the old guard, Yang-uk Kang and Il Kim, died within two years of their election to the post.²⁰⁷

In this context, there were visible signs of Kim's relaxing the reins of power.²⁰⁸ Instead of the "Great Leader", Kim Jong-il began to make the "on-the-spot guidance tours",²⁰⁹ and official speeches. Gradually, Kim Jong-il succeeded to the second highest position in the party. Officially, the younger Kim was fourth in the order of the KWP until the death of his father in 1994. However, this rise of Kim was *de facto* the emergence of a new leader in North Korea.²¹⁰ The 1980s was a transitional period of political succession in North Korea. Kim Jong-il had a sort of management training as the new leader of the state, with the protection and guidance of his father, so that he could grasp political power without opposition and construct his own leadership. Finally, when Kim Il-sung died on 8th July 1994, Kim Jong-il became the "Great Leader" of North Korea.

The South Korean media has criticized Kim Jong-il for being able to succeed to power through removing his political rivals in this transitional period. However, in the academic field of North Korean Studies, it has been recognized that there were no signs of a political purge during this period. Jung-suk Lee insists that there was almost no resistance to the

²⁰⁶ To celebrate the occasion, the North Korean government extended an invitation to more than 200 representatives from 118 countries. Moreover, the world's tallest stone monument, the *Juchetap*, a North Korean Arch of Triumph, the *Kaesunmoon*, and the Kim Il Sung Stadium were unveiled on the day. See, Dae-sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 287.

²⁰⁷ Kang died on 9th January 1983, at the age of eighty, and Kim on 9th March 1984, at the age of seventy-four. *The Nodong Shinmoon*, 10th January, 1983; 10th March 1984. Hyun Choi, Chang-chul Chun in 1982, Baek-yong O, Man-keum Kim, Sung-chul Park, and Chun-choo Yim and a number of Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese guerilla comrades also died in 1984.

²⁰⁸ Dae-sook Suh designates Kim's relaxation as "semi-retirement". *Op. Cit.*, 288-292.

²⁰⁹ The "on-the-spot guidance tour" was a unique method of Kim Il-sung's mass education. During the national construction period, Kim had organized a number of direct visits to grassroots communities in order to discuss together how to achieve goals in production and development. These visits and discussions had been a special way for Kim to strengthen his regime not only economically, but also politically through direct contacts with ordinary people. According to North Korean sources, Kim used to visit grassroots communities for more than 150 days per year. Concerning the tours, see, *Ibid.*, 166-168.

²¹⁰ Jung-suk Lee, *A Recognition of Modern North Korea*, 511. N.B., Kim Jong-il began to be called the "Dear Leader" of North Korean from 1981. See, *The Naewei Tongshin*, 6th June 1981.

succession of Kim Jong-il because he had already proved his quality as the future leader of North Korea.²¹¹

However, it must be said that this kind of political succession from father to son was similar to the old custom of Asian Confucian feudalism, which the Asian Communists had considered one of the main enemies of the Asian Communist revolution. Furthermore, in the process of political succession, North Korea lost an opportunity for change, and opening up to the outside world. Kim Il-sung closed North Korea's door even more firmly during this period, isolating the country still further from external pressures and criticisms.

The death of Rev. Yang-uk Kang, and the rise of Kim Jong-il, was a new context for Protestant Christianity in North Korea because, in contrast to his father, the younger Kim had neither direct experience of Christianity, nor any direct relationship with the Christians. Most of the younger Kim's power elites, the second generation of the anti-Japanese guerilla leaders, were not familiar with Christianity as well. The Christians now faced a new challenge: they would have to make Christianity understandable to the new generation of North Korean Communists, so that they would not discriminate against them again.

1.2 International Isolation

While North Korea was in the process of passing on the political succession, from Kim senior to Kim junior, the outside world was rapidly changing. In the 1960s, North Korea had declared its independence from the USSR and China, and in the 1970s it turned to the non-aligned movement. However, the non-aligned movement was already declining, in the 1980s, and most Communist countries were developing a pragmatic diplomatic approach, which emphasized economic benefit apart from Communist internationalism. Moreover, the voice of people, which sought to move the Communist governments towards the market economy and democracy, began to explode in the Communist countries. In the end, most Communist regimes dramatically collapsed from 1989 onwards, and policies of openness and transformation were brought in.

²¹¹ Jung-suk Lee, *Op. Cit.*, 519-529.

In spite of this tide of change, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il rowed the boat of North Korea against the stream in order to secure their political succession.²¹² They were afraid of the external influences promoting change coming into North Korea. Therefore, they locked the door by maintaining *Urisik Sahoejueui*, or Socialism in Our Style.²¹³ In his New Year message in 1993, Kim Il-sung said, “We will steadfastly maintain our independence and faithfully uphold our revolutionary principles and international duties, no matter how complicated the circumstances may be”.²¹⁴ Although the international situation had changed radically, Kim stuck to the same old policy of independence, and condemned the USSR and China as traitors of the Communist revolution.²¹⁵ This closed-door policy increased still further the diplomatic isolation of North Korea.²¹⁶

In this context of isolation, the new leadership of the KWP began to be interested in the active international relationships that were open to the KCF. They considered that the KCF, while remaining a Non-Governmental Organization could play the role of being a diplomatic channel to the outside world.²¹⁷

1.3 Economic Crisis and Famine

One of the most dramatic changes in North Korea during this period was the economic crises from 1990, culminating in the terrible famine from 1993. As we pointed out in the previous chapter, the economy of North Korea had been stagnating since the 1970s because of over-investment in military expenses. However, it did not become a crisis until 1990. According to

²¹² See, R. A. Scalapino and H. Lee ed., *North Korea in a Regional and Global Context*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986; S. Yu, “Political Succession in North Korea”, *Korea and World Affairs*, vol. 6, 1982, 565-594.

²¹³ Concerning the *Urisik Sahoejueui*, see, Sang-woo Rhee, “North Korea in 1991: Struggle to Save Chuche’s Amid Signs of Change”, *Asian Survey*, vol. 32, 1992, 56-63; Moon-young Huh, “1980nyundae Bukhan eui Daejung, Daeso mit Daenam Jungchaek Yunku-Jung, So Kaebanghwa Jungckaek eul Jungsimeuro”, (A study of the Diplomatic Policy of North Korea in Relation to the Soviet Union, China and South Korea in the 1980s, with Special Reference to the Influence of Opening and Transforming Policy of the Soviet Union and China”, PhD Thesis, Sungkyunkwan University, 1991.

²¹⁴ *The Nodong Shinmoon*, 1st January 1993.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Concerning the foreign policy of North Korea in this period, see, Y. H. Kihl, “North Korea’s Foreign Relations: Diplomacy of Promotive Adaptation”, *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 10, 1991, 30-45.

²¹⁷ Interview with Kyung-seo Park, 28th November 2000, Seoul.

a US congress report, the economy of North Korea had averaged about 3 percent growth rate annually from 1984-1990.²¹⁸

However, with the beginning of the 1990s, the North Korean economy hit a downward turn. The gross national product (GNP) decreased 3.7 percent in 1990 and 5.2 percent in 1992.²¹⁹ From 1993, it was not even able to gather detailed statistics on the economy because famine hit all across North Korea. Since 1990, harvests in North Korea had been reducing steadily each year. The reasons of this reduction were shortage of fuel and farm inputs, which the Soviet Union had previously given freely as part of an assistance package.²²⁰ In 1990, the USSR asked North Korea to pay in foreign currency for the oil supply. North Korea, however, did not have enough currency because the USA had embargoed the country, preventing it from engaging in international trade and business, ever since the Korean War.²²¹ The lack of fuel also crippled the manufacturing industry of North Korea because the electricity of North Korea, which largely depended on oil from the USSR for its electricity supply. The country's total electricity consumption in 1999 was only 55 percent of what it had been in 1991.²²² As a result of the electricity shortage, most factories stopped operating. There was not even enough to provide energy for homes from 1993. What was worse, China also ceased to supply free food assistance, which had amounted to approximately one million tons of crops per year, and demanding foreign currency payment from 1990 onwards. North Korea always had some difficulty to produce enough food because about eighty percent of its territory is mountainous.

On the top of this economic crisis, a series of natural disasters also hit North Korea from 1993. During the summer of 1993, it endured heavy hailstorms, especially in Whanghae province,

²¹⁸ "North Korea: Economy", in A. M. Savada ed., *North Korea: A Country Study*, Washington, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* The total GNP of North Korea in 1991 was US\$ 22.9 billion, or US\$ 1,038 per capita.

²²⁰ See, E. Banzhanov and N. Banzahanov, "Soviet Views on North Korea", *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, 1991, 1123-1138; M. Tamaki, "The North Korean Economy During 1990-1991", in *Kita Chosen no keizei to boekin tenbo*, (North Korean Economics and Trade Prospects), Tokyo, Japan External Trade Organization, 1991, 1-21.

²²¹ Even now neither corporations nor individuals from the western world are able to have any financial dealings with North Korea through the international banking system. For example, in 1998, the WCC tried to transfer US\$ 20,000 to the KCF for a project fund, but it was blocked by the New York Bank. Kyung-seo Park, "KP9201-Activities of Korean Christian Federation", 22nd April 1998, WCC-Asia Desk memorandum.

²²² A. M. Savada ed., *Op. Cit.*, North Korea relies on three sources of commercial energy, coal, oil and hydropower. However, it became two in 1999. Coal accounted for almost 77% of primary energy consumption and hydropower for more than 13%, because the USSR stopped supplying oil to North Korea.

which is the major grain producing area. Then, for nineteen days, between 30th July and 18th August, the country was confronted with torrential rains of more than 300 mm on average per day, which claimed many victims.²²³ Again in 1995, North Korea was hit three times repeatedly by torrential rains.²²⁴ As most dams could not cope with more than 400-800 mm of rain per day, many of them broke and water crashed into fields, destroying crops due to be harvested one and a half months later.²²⁵ According to the statistics of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, in 1989, 8,100,000 tons of crops were harvested in North Korea. However, in 1993, this reduced to 6,640,000 tons, and in 1995 only 4,930,000 tons were harvested.²²⁶ Because of this, most North Korean people in 1993 were able to eat only a kind of corn soup twice a day. In 1995, most North Korean people were not even able to have this simple soup, and only 100 grams of food per day were distributed.²²⁷

As the famine worsened, hundreds of thousands of North Korean asylum seekers fled to China to find food. Broadcasts reported that two or three million people died in North Korea because of starvation.²²⁸ The famine was most terrible for children and elderly people.²²⁹ The United Nations' World Food Planning warned that it could be possible that North Korea loses "one generation" because a lot of children were already dead, and even children who survived during the famine are now having other difficulties on account of the malnutrition they experienced early in their lives.²³⁰ A number of North Korean asylum seekers in China said in

²²³ "Act Team Visit North Korea: Recommendations More Aid", 2nd-9th March 1996, 6.

²²⁴ The first time was for one week from 8th to 15th July, mostly affecting Paekdoo mountain area in Yangkang and Jakang provinces. The second downpour was for two weeks from 26th July to 12th August and affected almost the whole of North Korea. The third disaster lasted ten days between 17th and 27th August and particularly affected the central part of North Korea. For details, see, *Ibid*, 7.

²²⁵ According to the Rehabilitation Commission of North Korea, the devastation amounted to US\$ 2 billion. 1,500 houses were destroyed. 75 people, 26,000 cows, 66,000 pigs, 10,000 goats, 32,000 sheep, 160,000 chickens, 180,000 ducks and 42,000 rabbits were killed. Vast tracts of rice fields inundated and 100 million green houses smashed. Quoted from *Ibid*, 7-8.

²²⁶ "Executive Report on North Korea", UN-FAO, December 1995.

²²⁷ "Report of ACT TEAM Visit to North Korea", 27th May – 3rd June 1997.

²²⁸ "Famine May Have Killed Two Million in North Korea", *CNN News*, 19th August 1998; "North Korea Loses 3 Million in Famine", *BBC World News*, 17th February 1999.

²²⁹ According to the UN-FPA, the infant mortality rate in North Korea rose to 14.1 in 1995, and 18.6 in 1997 per one thousand. The average life span of the North Koreans decreased from 72.2 to 70.1 in this period. This was a dramatic decrease in the statistic of the average life span within two years. The increase of infant mortality and the decrease of the average life span in North Korea in this period was one of the worst figures all over the world. *The Hankyoreh*, 5th June 2002.

²³⁰ In 1997, UN-WFP reported that 80% of North Korean children were in a state of malnutrition. *The Kukmin Daily*, 5th July 1997; *New York Times*, 11th June 1997; see also, *The Hankyoreh*, 7th May 2002. UNICEF also reported Concerning 800,000 children in North Korea were at risk of malnutrition. See, D. Frado, "North Korea Emergency Update Note 14", UNICEF, 8th August 1997.

interviews that they saw several families commit collective suicide to escape the suffering of starvation.²³¹

The causes of economic crisis and famine in North Korea in the 1990s were complex. It was a combination of several factors and problems, including over-investment in military expenses and the closed-door policy, the cessation of free aid from the USSR and China, the US economic embargo, and above all, the succession of natural disasters that hit the country. All these helped to bring about human tragedy in North Korea. Paradoxically, this terrible situation became an opportunity for the northern Christians to give witness to their commitment to the wider community.

2. The Christian-Juche Dialogue: Seeking a Theological Identity

2.1 The Juche Idea

The south-centered Confucian power elites had discriminated against the northern part of the Korean peninsula during the Chosun Dynasty. The Japanese colonial rule that followed was even worse for the North. Although the northern people established an independent socialist country after the liberation, North Korea was often considered a satellite country of the USSR and China. It was in this context that the *Juche* Idea emerged as the national ideology, promoting independence, under Kim Il-sung during the 1950s and thereafter.²³²

Juche is the word that sums up the political thought of Kim Il-sung. It consists of two Korean words: *ju* means lord, master, owner, ruler, the main one, and so forth; *che* means the body, the whole, the essence, the substance, the style. In Korean, the word *Juche* thus refers to the basic object, the main constituent, or the basis of action. It is often used with the suffix *sung*, e.g. *Juchesung*, meaning to act in accord with one's own judgment. As a system of values, *Juche* is commonly translated as "self-reliance." This notion has become the blueprint of North Korean society and the central guidance for policies. It has evolved through various phases ranging from a mere political slogan to a comprehensive *Weltanschauung*.

²³¹ A South Korean newspaper, *The Hankyoreh*, which conservative politicians had criticized as a pro-Communist newspaper during the military regime, interviewed more than four hundred asylum seekers from North Korea, and reported this shocking news of family suicide. See, *The Hankyoreh*, 10th March 1998.

²³² Concerning the socio-historical context of the *Juche* Idea, see, Chapter V, Section 1.3.

In his own explanation of the idea, Kim Il-sung said that the basis of *Juche* is “man is master of nature and society, and the main factor that decides all matters”.²³³ The master of socialist construction is the masses, and the power to effect revolution and construction rests with the people. The master of one’s fate is oneself, and power to control one’s fate rests with oneself.²³⁴ Therefore, *Juche*’s self-reliance has been interpreted as meaning a human-centered world-view. *Juche* theoreticians maintain, “Society consists of people, social wealth, and social relations. Here man is always master. Both social wealth and social relations are created by man and serve him”.²³⁵ As such, man should not be subjected to enslavement of any kind, whether it is caused by economic poverty, political subjugation, or military domination on the part of other human beings. Furthermore, human beings, according to *Chajusung* or “self-independence”, should never be manipulated by institutions, material conditions, or mythical beliefs such as religious dogmas. The doctrine that, man is the master of the universe suggests that along with its many institutions, society is created by man and should serve the well-being of its members.

While being an ideology that proclaimed itself to be essentially socialist and Marxist, *Juche* in fact stands in defiance of material determinism of history. The Marxist premise of economic or material structure as the substructure upon which all superstructures are founded is unequivocally rejected. Instead, in the *Juche* ideology, it is the spiritual consciousness that determines the course of history and it alone underlies all other structures.²³⁶ In fact, *Juche*’s fundamental deviation from Marxism begins at this point. According to its doctrine, human behavior is guided not by the conditions of the modes and relations of production, as Marx

²³³ *Kim Il-sung Works*, Pyongyang, Foreign languages Publishing House, vol. 27, 491.

²³⁴ There are many books on the subject of *Juche* by Kim, but these are all collections of his speeches, reports, and portions of interviews. See, among others, Kim Il-sung, *Juche sasang e daehayeo*, (On the Idea of Juche), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1977; Kim Il-sung, *Uri hyukmyung eseooui Juche e daehayeo*, (On the *Juche* in Our Revolution), Pyongyang, KWP Press, 1970. For the study of the *Juche* idea, see, such representative works as the three-volume study by the Academy of Social Sciences ed, *Hyukmyung kwa kunsule kwanhan Kim Il Sung Donjieui Sasang kwa keu widaehan seanghwallyuk*, (The Thought of Comrade Kim Il-sung on Revolution and Construction and Its Great Strength), Pyongyang, Sahoe Kwahakwon Chulpansa, 1969. Another work by the same institute is entitled *Widaehan Suryung Kim Il Sung Dongji eui Juche Sasang*, (The *Juche* Idea of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung). In English, See, Kim Jong-il, *On the Juche Idea*, Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982.

²³⁵ *Kim Il Sung Encyclopedia*, New Delhi, Vishwanath, 1992, 85.

²³⁶ Kim Jong-il, *On the Juche Idea*, 9-10.

had claimed, but by the direct guidance of the “brain”.²³⁷ Likewise, social change occurs in accordance with the command of the society’s *Noesu* or “brain”, as opposed to being dictated by the forces and relations of production.²³⁸ In this way, a direct analogy is made between the individual human being, with his or her brain and the social organism, which is also said to have a brain. This analogy enables the development of a theory of the “socio-political life” in which a triangular relationship is advanced involving the people, the Party, and the *Suryung* (the Great Leader). The leader, in this case, performs the function of “the brain” that makes decisions and commands actions for the various parts of the body, the Party is the nerve system that mediates and maintains equilibrium between the brain and the body; and, finally, come the people themselves, who implement the decisions of the brain and channel feedback to the Leader.

The central concept in the ideology is *Uisiksung* or “consciousness”. According to *Juche*, it is this quality of man that makes human beings unique and distinguishable from all other living species. *Juche* theoreticians perceive consciousness “in relation to man’s independence and creative abilities to reshape and change the world”. They define consciousness as “a mental activity, a special function of the brain which directs man’s independent and creative activities in a unified way”.²³⁹ Man is meant to be conscious of his place in the universe as dictated by the aforementioned *Chajusung* (self-independence). This *Chajusung* guides all forms of relationship in the world of living beings, and addresses the concerns and problems arising in the existential historical situations. Man is a “conscious social being”. *Uisiksung* is “an attribute of social man, which determines all his endeavors to understand and reshape the world and himself”.²⁴⁰ This consciousness guarantees the *Chajusung* and creativity of man, and ensures his “purposeful cognition and practice”.²⁴¹

Central to the *Juche* is its interpretation of human nature. According to this doctrine, man consists of body and spirit. It is the spirit that enables man to cultivate and develop consciousness. And it is also the spirit that ultimately commands the body. However, consciousness will not develop without concerted efforts by the individual through education and continuously internalizing the collective will of the society, as represented in the guidance

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

²³⁹ *Kim Il Sung Encyclopedia*, 79.

²⁴⁰ Kim Jong-il, *Op. Cit.*, 11.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

of the Leader and the Party.²⁴² In this way, *Juche* adheres to the logic of a dialectical synthesis among the three entities - the leader, the party and the people - in order to create the “socio-political body.”

While this *Uisiksung* refers to metaphysical or spiritual realities that prepare for the development of human nature, *Changbalsung*, or creativity, is the internal component of human nature that is the active, mobile, and operating force in human action. If *Uisiksung* is static and philosophical, *Changbalsung* may be understood as dynamic and scientific. This quality of man enables him to apply abstract principles to concrete reality by creatively adapting the principles to the specific condition of the society. Kim Il-sung defines creativity as “a quality of man who transforms the world in keeping with his independent aspirations and requirements”.²⁴³ Accordingly, *Juche* maintains that it is this quality of man that has developed and adapted Marxism and Leninism in such a way that it can work in the peculiar, indigenous situation of North Korea. Creativity thus advances the original Marxist-Leninist ideological system to greater perfection. Conversely, if political ideologies and institutional arrangements are copied from foreign experiences, without adjusting them creatively to the concrete indigenous condition of each society, they will exhibit irregularities and ill-symptoms.²⁴⁴ Therefore, a society of people must not blindly adopt foreign values or institutions. To establish *Juche* thus means to approach the revolution and construction by oneself in a self-reliant manner, using one’s own head, trusting in one’s own strength, relying on one’s own revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, and rejecting dependence on others. It also means to maintain a creative mind, opposing dogmatism, and applying the universal principle of Marxist-Leninism, as well as learning from the experiences of other countries, in such a way that these are made to suit the national characteristics of one’s own country.²⁴⁵

We may call this understanding of the human being the first, or fundamental part of the *Juche* Idea. In the second part, the *Juche* Idea then lays out certain socio-historical principles. Kim’s ideology not only tried to give a world-view, but also a socio-historical view, which centered on the mass of the people. The most important socio-historical principle in the *Juche* idea is

²⁴² *Exposition of the Juche Idea*, Pyongyang, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1983, 28-29.

²⁴³ Kim Il-sung, *Answers to the Questions Raised by Foreign Journalists*, Pyongyang, Foreign Language Publishing House, 285.

²⁴⁴ *Exposition of the Juche Idea*, 26-27.

²⁴⁵ Kim Il-sung, “Report to the Fifth Congress of the Korean Worker’s Party on the Work of Central Committee”, in *Selected Works*, vol. 5, Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970, 500-501.

that “the mass of the people is the subject of history”.²⁴⁶ The *Juche* defines the socio-historical movement as an independent and creative movement of the popular masses. In this movement, the people’s independent ideological consciousness plays a decisive role in the revolutionary struggle.²⁴⁷ The Marxist materialistic conception of history considered all social movements from the angle of economic relations which it took as the basic factor. It explained the history of society as a process determined by the replacement of various modes of production. However, according to *Jucheans*, by bringing up the question of the subject of history, and insisting that the masses of the people are the real subject of social history, the *Juche* Idea brought new development to the Marxist understanding of the laws that govern historical change.²⁴⁸

Kim Jong-il insists that the working masses thus came to be recognized as the master of history, and the motive force of social progress.²⁴⁹ In the *Juche* idea, the working masses are a community of people with *Chajusung*, *Uisiksung* and *Changbalsung*. In order to be the subject of history, the masses of people must have *Chajusung*. *Juche* insists, “The history of human society is a history of the struggle of the popular masses for defending and realizing *Chajusung*”.²⁵⁰ Because the subject of history is the popular masses, human history can be scientifically explained only when the perspective of the working masses is placed at its center.²⁵¹ However, when the people have no consciousness (*Uisiksung*) they are the subject of history (*Chajusung*), they will never become the center of history. And even once they have realized this position, they must develop specific means and strategies (*Changbalsung*) to realize it.

Juche also claims that if the masses of the people are to hold their position, and fulfil their role as subject of history, they must be linked with leadership. “Only under correct leadership would the masses, though creators of history, be able to occupy the position and perform their role as the subject of socio-historical development”.²⁵² Here, the role of personal leadership – i.e. of great leader himself - was emphasized in the revolutionary struggle, being added to the traditional notion of the leadership of the Communist party in Marxist-Leninism. This notion

²⁴⁶ Kim Jong-il, *Op. Cit.*, 14.

²⁴⁷ *Exposition of the Juche Idea*, 40.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁴⁹ Kim Jong-il, *Op. Cit.*, 15.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 17.

of personal leadership is a delicate point in the *Juche* Idea, because when it is too much emphasized, it is in danger of falling into a cult of the personality of a specific individual. This emphasis on personal leadership can be seen as an intentional extension of the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Leninism. It also, of course, enshrined Kim Il-sung.

Han S. Park claims that the *Juche* theoreticians copied this theory from Christian theology.²⁵³ It sounds very similar to Paul's ecclesiology, which used an analogy of the head, the body and the organism. Although Park failed to give direct evidence for his claim, it might be possible that Kim, who had been a Sunday school teacher at the Kilim Presbyterian Church, borrowed Paul's ideas in developing his political idea.

Lastly, the *Juche* Idea suggests the practical guiding principles to be taken in regard to revolution and construction: *Juche* (主體, self-reliance) in ideology, *Chaju* (自主, self-independence) in politics, *Charip* (自立, self-sustenance) in economy, and *Chawi* (自衛, self-defense) in military matters.²⁵⁴ Here, the practical suggestion of *Juche* idea concentrated on the issue of national independence rather than the other practical demands of the people. To ensure the *Chajusung* of the masses, the *Chajusung* of nation was to come first. Although the basic thesis of *Juche* is that the masses of the people are the subject of history, the guiding principles were full of slogans for the mobilizing people for national independence, without balancing these with slogans concerning the quality of life of the people. This is the main problem of the application of *Juche* idea in practice. The macro approach to nationalism sacrificed the micro approach on behalf of the people's welfare. Consequently, this macro approach began to fall into a form of totalitarianism, which justified Kim's absolute power on the grounds that it was necessary for the struggle for national independence, from the 1970s onwards.

In spite of this problem, the four slogans of *Juche*, *Chaju*, *Charip* and *Chawi* which North Korea used for developing an indigenous Communism was a remarkable attempt at self-reliance within the Communist bloc. In Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, "workers have no nation of their own."²⁵⁵ However, in the *Juche* Idea, the concept of nationalism was

²⁵³ Han S. Park, "The Nature and Evolution of *Juche* Ideology", in *North Korea: Ideology, Politics, Economy*, 15.

²⁵⁴ See, *Exposition of the Juche Idea*, 99-124.

²⁵⁵ "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in M. Cowling ed., *The Communist Manifesto: New*

given a positive interpretation, and integrated into the process of the socialist revolution then presumed to be taking place in the third world countries.²⁵⁶ The *Juche* idea critically states that imperialism is possible even within the Communist bloc, and can be practiced by the Communist super powers. This positive understanding of nationalism, unique within the Communist countries of the time, resulted from Kim's experience of the anti-Japanese guerilla struggle, and his opposition further foreign interventions during the 1960s. In the *Juche* idea, national independence is not a sub-task of the Communist revolution, but it has an equal importance with the Communist revolution, especially in the Third World context. This is a crucial difference compared to orthodox Marxism.²⁵⁷ Although the *Weltanschauung* of the *Juche* Idea is certainly different from orthodox Marxism, this does not mean that it rejected Marxist-Leninism but only that it accepted Marxist-Leninism critically and integrated it with the North Korean context. It tried to establish an independent theory of the Korean revolution, with its own initiative. The nationalistic characteristic of the *Juche* Idea rooted well in the soil of North Korea, because of the northerners' historical experience of being subjected to discrimination.

The *Juche* Idea also introduced a strongly optimistic view of human moral ability. Although it was necessary to be hopeful in this regard after the disaster of the war in order to mobilize manpower for the reconstruction, the overestimation of human ability ended up in the cult of a super-personality of *Suryung* (the great leader).

The emphasis on the role of the leader in the revolutionary struggle brought a degeneration in the *Juche* Idea. In fact, the philosophy of *Juche* was the outcome of a collective work of *Juche* scholars. However, the revised platform of the KWP in 1980 announced that Kim had "invented" the idea.²⁵⁸ According to the *Juche* Idea, the working masses are the master of North Korea, but in practice, Kim became the only master of the country through enshrining the *Suryung*. To achieve this, the *Juche* Idea was "privatized" as *Kimilsungism*.²⁵⁹

Interpretations, New York, New York University Press, 1998, 27.

²⁵⁶ Concerning the *Juche*'s understanding on nationalism, see, Dong-soo Kim, "Nation in the *Juche* Idea", in Haek-jip Ra et al, *Kidokyo eseo bon Juchesasang*, (The *Juche* Idea from a Christian Perspective), Seoul, Minjungsa, 1993, 304-318.

²⁵⁷ C.f., In the European context, nationalism has been considered as a negative ideology. However, in the Asian context, where most countries experienced colonialism, nationalism has been positively interpreted in relation to national liberation movements.

²⁵⁸ *Chosun Rodongdang Kyuyak*, 1980, (The Revised Platform of the KWP, 1980), Preface.

²⁵⁹ Concerning this transition, see, Sung-joon Koh, "A Study of Transition from the *Juche* Idea to *Kimilsungism*", in *Juchesasang Yunku*, (A Study of the *Juche* Idea), Seoul, Taebaek, 1989, 9-82.

It may be understandable that a small country in search of self-identity should launch a campaign to project abroad an image of the unity and stability of its people and their political system, promoting their leader in the process. However, the North Korean practice of personal cult goes to extremes seldom found in other part of the world. Kim's photograph is displayed at home and in every social space, and is more prominent than either the national flag or the national emblem.²⁶⁰ There are schools, songs, poems, essays, stories, and even flowers named after him. Giant statues and towers praising him were built all across North Korea. Through these propaganda works, Kim was praised as the only national "messiah", and called the *Ubeoi* (father) *Suryung*. Speaking at the fifth Congress of the KWP, Deputy Prime Minister, Sung-chul Park said, "for all members of our party and for our entire people, there can be no greater honor than to live and fight under the wise leadership of our beloved leader Kim Il-sung, the father of *Juche*."²⁶¹ The climax of the personality cult was his handing over the political succession to his son, who was praised as the "holy blood" of Korean revolution. In reality, this is an expression neither of the *Juche* Idea nor of Communism; instead, it is merely an extreme form of modern totalitarianism.

During the 1960s, the *Chajusung* became the most important principle of the *Juche* Idea, in order to struggle with the factions handled by China and the USSR, and oppose the foreign intervention in domestic politics. However, the *Chajusung* continued to dominate even in the changed context of the 1980s. This over-emphasis on self-independence resulted in international isolation. According to the *Changbalsung*, in carrying out the socialist revolution, the Korean people were to apply the changes and socio-historical developments of the world taking place in to their own North Korean context. However, in reality, North Korea has ignored the wind of change of the outside world. Even in economics, the notion of self-independence has been dogmatically applied by emphasizing an extremist self-support system. In this modern world, it is almost impossible to sustain a country's economy without developing international trade.

Despite these problems, it is necessary to draw attention that part of the *Juche* philosophy that emphasizes spiritual consciousness as the determining factor in driving the course of history.

²⁶⁰ N.B., The only place, where the author of this thesis cannot find his picture is the churches during his fieldwork in North Korea.

²⁶¹ *The Rodong Shinmoon*, 13th November 1970.

The *Juche* Idea thus importantly holds the spiritual dimension of human beings, in high regard, contrary to the Marxist theory of material determinism. This particularity has been an important philosophical reference point for the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue, because it meant that spiritual aspect of religion could be interpreted positively by the *Juche*ans.

2.2 The Christian-*Juche*an Dialogue

2.2.1 The Proposal of Ki-jun Koh

A Czechoslovakian theologian, J. M. Lochman asked some question from within his own context, which could be applied to North Korean Christianity: “How should a Christian live and react to a situation where the official society considers its very existence as undesirable, and thinks of it as an obsolete remnant from the benighted past and an obstacle to progress? Should the church then cut off its links with the society and ignore its development, concentrating on its own spiritual life – and hope just to survive?”²⁶² When the revival of the Protestant Christianity in North Korea stabilized, as Lochman points out, the Christians in North Korea began to question how they could forge links between *Juche*an society and the meaning of their Christian existence in North Korea. The Christians, for whom mere survival had hitherto been their main concern, began to search for their identity in North Korean society.

Rev. Ki-jun Koh was the first to suggest a Christian-*Juche*an dialogue, in his paper “Socialism and Christianity in North Korea”.²⁶³ As soon as he was elected as the general secretary of KCF in 1981, he proposed the dialogue as a new policy of the KCF. Koh began to observe his journey of faith:

I was born in a Christian family and baptized when I was an infant. Since then, I have kept my Christian faith up to over *Whangap* (sixtieth birthday). Long time ago, I had doubts about the socialists, and believed that Christianity and socialism were opposite systems of belief. There were socialists in North Korea who believed that Christianity and socialism were ideological enemies, and they discriminated against the Christians. On the other hand, there were pastors who identified Christianity with

²⁶² J. M. Lochman, *Christ and Prometheus?*, Geneva, WCC, 1988, 23.

²⁶³ Later, this paper was published in South Korea. See, Dong-kun Hong ed., *Vienna eso Frankfurt kkaji: Buk kwa Haewoi Dongpo, Kidokja kanewi Tongil Daehwa 10 Nyun Hoego*, (From Vienna to Frankfurt: A Memory of Ten Years of Reunification Talks between the North Korean Christians and the Korean Christian Diaspora), Seoul, Hyungsangsa, 1994, 135-143.

anti-Communism, and encouraged this in their preaching... However, now we find that the Christians live without any problem with the socialists in our daily life, under the guidance of the *Juche* idea.²⁶⁴

Koh examined why and how the Christians and the socialists were now able to live together without a conflict between the two belief-systems, a situation that was very different from previous experience. He believed that the answer of this question would clarify the theological identity of revived Christianity in North Korea. He also asked: "Is it possible for the Christians and the *Jucheans* to cooperate together in the construction of socialist country, and for the reunification of fatherland?" and on the presumption that the answer to this question would be affirmative, "Where is the rationale for this cooperation?"²⁶⁵ These were the theological questions that revived North Korean Christianity needed to answer, yet they were remarkable. While the churches had reopened since 1972, nobody had tried to interpret their experiences before Koh.

Koh understood the *Juche* idea as follows:

When I read the *Juche* idea from a Christian perspective, briefly, the *Juche* idea can be summarized as a human centered philosophical ideology. It is a sort of ideology of love for human beings, which approaches all social phenomena from the standpoint of the interest of the masses of the people, and demands service for the well-being of man.²⁶⁶

Based on this understanding, he found similarities between Christianity and the *Juche* idea:

Firstly, there is an ideological similarity between North Korean Communism and Christianity. Of course, it is difficult to deny that there are fundamental differences in philosophy, world-view, and methodology of salvation between the *Juche* idea and Christianity. However, we cannot deny that the human centered approach of the *Juche* idea has a similarity to Christianity, which emphasizes love for human beings. Although the Communists and the Christians have a different ideology and a different faith, we can work together for the well-being of our people and nation, and for the development of our society, on the basis of this similarity.²⁶⁷

Here, Koh was trying to connect the core of two systems of thought to justify cooperation between the Christians and the *Jucheans*. He went on further to say:

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

In my understanding, the *Juche* idea, which is a human centered philosophy, is an ideology to realize the *Chajusung* (self-reliance) of the exploited and oppressed working masses of people. This thought is similar to the Christian teaching, which preaches the liberation of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized.²⁶⁸

Here, Koh was attempting to reintroduce Christianity as a religion for the liberation of the suffering people. This was a distinct change of image of Christianity in North Korea. It was also a significant challenge to the North Korean Communists, who had understood Christianity to be a “pro-American imperialistic religion”. Koh was surely intentionally proclaiming that North Korean Christianity was no longer a pro-American religion, but a religion “of” and “for” the North Korean people, and he would prove it through launching a process of dialogue between the Christians and the *Jucheans*.

Koh also drew attention to common ground on national independence:

Thirdly, both the Communists and the Christians in North Korea have been considering the issue of national independence as a top priority of their mission. In this tradition, we can work together for the issue of the reunification of the fatherland.²⁶⁹

Koh recognized the positive Communist contribution to the national liberation movement. At the same time, he reminded the Communists of the history of northern Christians’ commitment to the independence movement. He concluded that both the *Juche* idea and North Korean Christianity share, as a common characteristic, concern for national liberation. By doing this, he was reminding the Communists that the Christians too could make a positive contribution to national issues, such as reunification.

Koh’s proposal of a dialogue opened up a new horizon for both the *Jucheans* and the Christians in North Korea. For the *Juche* Communists, the Christians began to appear in a different light. Their new image made them possible partner who could cooperate with the Communists in addressing public issues. For the Christians, too, a new task were emerging, proposed by their General Secretary. After spending years simply trying to survive, they could now look forward to “wrestling”²⁷⁰ in a more positive and fruitful way with the *Jucheans*.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁷⁰ This terminology of “wrestling” is quoted from K. H. Ting, *No Longer Strangers: Selected Writings of K. H. Ting*, 76-78.

2.2.2 The Dialogue

Responding to the Koh's proposal, the Institute for the *Juche* Idea in Pyongyang and some Korean theologians living abroad decided to open a dialogue with the KCF. These theologians later organized themselves into a body known as the Association of Reunification Theologians Abroad. A consultation process of the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue was launched in 1981, entitled *Juchesasang kwa Chokuk Toingile kwanhan Bukkwa Hoewoidongpo Kidoksinjagan Daehwa*, or "Dialogue on the *Juche* Idea and the Reunification of the Fatherland among the Christians in the North and Overseas and North Korean Scholars." The dialogue consultations were held annually from 1981-1991 and a number of scholars participated.²⁷¹ There were representatives of the KCF from the Christian side,²⁷² and on the other side *Juche* scholars representing the Institute for the *Juche* Idea in the Academy of Social Science.²⁷³ Remarkably, a considerable number of Korean theologians abroad also took part in the consultations.²⁷⁴ The presence and contribution of these theologians was a great support for the KCF, which had limited intellectual resources both in quantity and quality, compared to the *Juche* scholars.²⁷⁵ To accommodate the participation of the Korean theologians living abroad, most consultations were held in foreign countries. This was a way of getting round the National Security Law of South Korea, which disallowed any civilian from visiting North Korea.

²⁷¹ The first Consultation on the Christian-*Juche*an Dialogue was held from 3rd-6th November 1981 in Vienna. The second was from 3rd-5th December 1982 in Helsinki. The third was from 5th-19th July 1983 in Pyongyang. The fourth was from 15th-17th June 1984 in Beijing. The fifth was from 15th-17th December 1984 in Vienna. The sixth was from 14th-16th December 1985 in Vienna. The seventh was from 18th-19th 1986 in Vienna. The eighth was from 15th-18th 1988 in Helsinki. The ninth was from 23rd-25th 1990 in Helsinki. The tenth was from 30th January-3rd February 1991 in Frankfurt. For details, see, Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 25-120.

²⁷² Rev. Ki-jun Koh, the general secretary of the KCF, Rev. Duk-ryong Kim, Rev. Hyun-dal Lim, Edler Kuk-rul Yum, Rev. Sung-bong Lee, Rev. choon-ku Lee, Rev. Se-il Kim, Rev. chul Lee, et al. participated in the consultations from the KCF side.

²⁷³ Prof. Sung-duk Park, the director of the Institute, Dr. Hyung-sup Yang, Dr. Kum-chul Chun, Prof. Young-kul Jin, Dr. Sung-moon Kim, Dr. Young-rul Kim, Prof. Jong-hun Lee, Prof. Min-kyu Kim, Prof. Kun-bae Lee, Prof. Jung-sup Song, Prof. Young-il Chun, Prof. Chang-ryong Choi, Prof. Kwang-sik Kim, et al. were the participants from the *Juche*an side.

²⁷⁴ Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, Prof. Hak-won Sunwoo, Prof. Wi-jo Kang, Dr. Hwa-sun Lee, Rev. Young-bihn Lee, Prof. Eun-sik Yang, Prof. Suk-jung Song, Prof. Kwnag-suk Kang, Rev. Dr. Sung-rak Kim, Prof. Dong-soo Kim, Prof. Ki-hwang Kim, Prof. Suk-ja Choi, et al. were the Korean theologians from overseas who participated.

²⁷⁵ It is necessary to remember that theological education in North Korea is at the level of pastoral training, rather than educating independent researchers. See, Chapter VI, Section 3.

The first consultation was held in November 1981, in Vienna.²⁷⁶ At the consultation, three papers were presented from the Christian side. Ki-jun Koh opened the consultation by introducing his proposal, once again emphasizing the necessity of dialogue. Wi-jo Kang,²⁷⁷ from the USA, read a paper on “The Responsibility of the Korean Christians in the History of National Division”.²⁷⁸ Kang claimed that the Korean Christians must escape from the legacy of the Cold-War mentality, which had justified the Korean division. He insisted that the responsibility of Christians in a conflict situation is not that of justifying collision or enmity, but rather that of fostering reconciliation. “Christianity is neither pro-Communism nor anti-Communism, but the spirit of love and reconciliation.”²⁷⁹ Lastly, Young-bihn Lee suggested four future tasks for Christianity in North Korea: developing a theology of reconciliation, solidarity with the poor, liberation from American Christianity, and gaining a progressive understanding of North Korean socialism.²⁸⁰ There was no presentation from the *Juche*an side at the first consultation. The *Juche*an delegates just listened to what the Christians said.

The second consultation was held in Helsinki in 1982. Two papers were presented, one from each side. Don-kun Hong from the Christian viewpoint, and Hyung-sup Yang, the Director of the Academy of Social Science in Pyongyang, from that of the *Juche*an idea. By reducing the presentations, more time was given to the social programs. The Christians invited the

²⁷⁶ “At first, the first consultation was planned to be held in Geneva. However, the Swiss church cancelled our reservation for the conference center on our arrival day due to the pressure of the South Korean government. We were not allowed to use any Christian facilities in Switzerland including even the Ecumenical Center. The Austrian church, which heard this news, allowed us to use the Schweitzer House in Vienna for the consultation. The church there also faced the same pressure, but ignored it. Therefore, we flew to Vienna, and finally we were able to have the first meeting there. However, the KCIA threatened the participants. About fifty South Koreans in Vienna demonstrated in front of the Schweitzer House shouting, “Get away! Agents of Kim Il Sung”, “Don’t blaspheme against Christianity”. We were able to finish the consultation with the protection of the Austrian police because some demonstrators attempted to enter the house. Because it was difficult to arrange proper conference centers, the consultations were mostly held in Vienna and Helsinki.” Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

²⁷⁷ Wi-jo Kang is Wilhelm Loehe Professor of World Religions and Mission, Wartburg Theological Seminary, USA. He is the author of *Religion and Politics in Korea Under the Japanese Rule*, *Christian Presence in Japan*, and *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics*, and co-editor of *Future of the Christian World Mission*.

²⁷⁸ See, Wi-jo Kang, “The Responsibility of Korean Christians in the History of National Division”, in Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 123-134.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁸⁰ See, Young-bihn Lee, “The Tasks of the Christians for the Reunification”, in Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 144-156.

Jucheans for worship, and organized an excursion and a cultural night. By doing this, the atmosphere of the consultation was much more sociable than the first consultation.²⁸¹

Hong, in his paper entitled, "Tasks of the Christians in Promoting the Reconciliation and Reunification of Nation",²⁸² argued that Korean Christianity had been captive in a pro-American and anti-Communist ideology since the partition of Korean peninsula. In his view, this anti-Communist Christian ideology had been produced without a proper understanding on Communism. Therefore, it was important for the Christians to realize what the Communists had actually said:

Dialogue is not a monologue. Dialogue means stating clearly the way we understand ourselves and our world-view to the partner. The Korean Communists have claimed that Christianity is merely the opium of the people, and the Korean Christians have believed Communism to be an atheistic evil. Both claims have the same problem of dogmatism, so that each has misunderstood the other. It is important to understand exactly what the partner is saying, and what we are saying. In other words, it is not sufficient to recognize each other as belonging to the same *minjok* (nation); rather the Communists should learn the ethos of the Bible and Christian theology, and the Christians should also study the *Juche* idea. This should be done before we discuss our possibilities for cooperation. Through this mutual learning, we will be able to find ways in which we can cooperate.²⁸³

In this respect, Hong claimed that concern for the poor and social justice, and a vision for social transformation are common ground between the two world-views, Christianity and the *Juche* idea.²⁸⁴ However, he failed to argue from the specific philosophical characteristics of the *Juche* idea, which is different to Marxism. He simply used the findings of the Christian-Marxist dialogue in Eastern Europe.²⁸⁵

In the second presentation, Yang gave an introduction on the *Juche* idea.²⁸⁶ His distinctive understanding was that national self-determination and independence are more important than classical liberation. Therefore, he claimed that the *Jucheans* emphasize the unity of the Korean people in view of complete national independence and reunification, rather than class

²⁸¹ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

²⁸² See, Dong-kun Hong, "Tasks of the Christians in Promoting the Reconciliation and Reunification of Nation", in Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 157-183.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 175-176.

²⁸⁵ See, *Ibid.*, 174-180.

²⁸⁶ Hyung-sup Yang, "The *Juche* Idea and the Reunification of Fatherland", in Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 184-201.

antagonism.²⁸⁷ From this standpoint he affirmed: “Of course, it is possible to work together with the Christians for national independence and reunification, which the *Jucheans* consider as the top priority of the Korean revolution.”²⁸⁸ However, he pointed out that in order to work together in this way, the Christians must not depend on foreign powers, and not justify the system of division.²⁸⁹ Here, Yang called for Christian patriotism, which demanded Christian commitment on the issue of reunification. Following his suggestion, the issue of reunification emerged as a common task of cooperation between the Christians and the *Jucheans*.²⁹⁰

Consequently, the consultations from 1983-1986 focused on the study of reunification in order to find a common understanding on the issue. In brief, through consultations in this period, both reached agreement on the principles and methodology of reunification, and issued joint statements on the subject.²⁹¹ According to Rev. Choon-ku Lee, one of most important results in this period was that the *Jucheans* realized that the Christians were able to make a significant contribution to reunification, for instance through exchange with South Korean Christians, and through developing a reunification theology.²⁹²

The fact that the third consultation from 5th-19th July 1983, was held in Pyongyang was significant because remarkably, during it, the dialogue team had opportunities to visit the house churches there. One of aims of this visit was to study how grassroots Christians understood their dual belief system, incorporating both Christianity and the *Juche* idea. According to Dong-kun Hong, the team found these grassroots Christians in Pyongyang recognized the positive contribution the *Juche* idea had made in the development of politics, economy and community culture in North Korea. They hardly experienced any conflict between the two belief systems in their ordinary life.²⁹³ This is a distinctive tendency of the post-war generation of grassroots Christians, compared to the Christian clash with the Communists in the pre-war generation. At the same time, the problem of a dualistic approach among the Christians was also noted, because they had a strong other-worldly faith.²⁹⁴ It seems that they had avoided any potential conflict between the two belief systems by adopting

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 200-201.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁹¹ For details, see, *Ibid.*, 43-59.

²⁹² Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

²⁹³ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

a “two kingdoms” theology, which separated the church and politics into two completely distinct spheres.

From 1988-1991 the dialogue continued to focus on “seeking the common ground”²⁹⁵ between Christianity and the *Juche* idea, in order to establish theoretical references for Christian cooperation with the *Jucheans* in this world. At first, it seems that the *Jucheans* scholars had difficulty finding this “common ground” with the Christians. Byung-soo Ahn even confirmed their old understanding of Christianity as an anti-nationalistic and anti-proletariat religion.²⁹⁶

However, the Christians strongly argued against this old view by introducing ideas from *minjung* theology being developed in South Korea and from Latin American liberation theology. Dong-soo Kim argued that Korean Christianity has not been always “the opium of the people”. For example, *minjung* theology in South Korean Christianity is a theology for the poor and the oppressed, who are similar to the proletariat in Communism. He went on further to suggest that the *minjung* churches and theologians have been at the frontline of the struggle for democracy and reunification in South Korea.²⁹⁷ For Kim, *minjung* theology was evidence of Korean Christianity serving for the socially marginalized people, in the same as the North Korean Communists had done for the proletariat.

Ki-jun Koh also criticized Ahn by describing and analyzing the efforts of North Korean Christians to promote reunification since the Tozanso conference. He insisted, “Now the Christians are among the most patriotic citizens in North Korea on the issue of reunification.”²⁹⁸ The introduction of *minjung* theology and liberation theology was a great challenge for the *Jucheans*. Therefore, Sung-duk Park, the Director of the Institute for the *Juche* Idea, promised that the *Juche* scholars would study modern theologies, and suggested a deepening of the dialogue.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ Quoted from, P. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front*, New York, Orbis, 1988

²⁹⁶ See, Byung-soo Ahn, “*Juchesasang kwa Uri Minjok eui Unmyung Gaechuk eui Ki*” (The *Juche* Idea and the Way of Improving Our Nation's Future), manuscript, The Eighth Dialogue on the *Juche* Idea and the Reunification of the Fatherland among the Christians in the North and Overseas and the North Korean Scholars, 15th-18th July 1988, Helsinki.

²⁹⁷ See, Dong-soo Kim, “*Juchesasang e daehan Ihae*”, (Understanding on the *Juche* Idea), manuscript, *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ See, Ki-jun Koh, “*Glion Hoieui Bogo*”, (The Report on the Glion Meeting), manuscript, *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 77.

The ninth consultation, in 1990, must be remembered as a historic moment in the development of the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue. Hyun-hwan Kim argued that the liberation theology had successfully used and developed the Marxist methodology of social analysis as a theological methodology.³⁰⁰ He claimed that liberation theology was no longer a peripheral theology, but had come into the mainstream of third world theologies. Furthermore, he challenged the *Jucheans* to change their understanding of religion, as follows:

In spite of the development of modern theology, which has been the theological reference for the Christian struggle for justice, democracy and reunification in Korea, the claim that Christianity is the opium of the people is still being followed and is captive to the old dogmatism of the Communist understanding of religion...The *Jucheans* must properly evaluate the Christian contribution to social transformation in Third World countries, and consider how to strengthen solidarity with the Christians in Korea.³⁰¹

Kim criticized the official statement of the KWP in the *Chulhak Sajeon* (The Dictionary of Philosophy), and *Jungchi Yongeo Sajun* (The Dictionary of Political Terms), which was still claiming that “Christianity is a method of feudal exploitation justifying the class system.” Kim insisted that such statements must now be rewritten.³⁰²

In response to this criticism, Sung-duk Park introduced a new way for *Jucheans* to understand Christianity in his paper, “A New Perspective on the *Juche* Idea of Christianity”.³⁰³ He began his presentation by saying that “there have been misunderstandings among the North Korea Communists, who said that Christianity and the *Juche* idea are not able to co-exist in North Korea”.³⁰⁴ As the Director of the Institute for the *Juche* Idea, he insisted that the *Juche*an perspective on Christianity is different to the Marxist understanding. As evidence, Park quoted Kim Jong-il’s understanding of religion:

The Great Leader rejected the maneuvers of anti-revolutionaries and imperialists in the name of religion, but he never rejected religions and believers. There are not always bad things in religion, but good teachings as well. It is remarkable that religion teaches people to love each other and live peacefully.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁰³ See, Sung-duk Park, “*Kidokyoe daehanun Juchesasang eui Saeroun Kwanjum*”, (A New Perspective on the *Juche* Idea of Christianity”, in Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 202-209.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

³⁰⁵ Kim Jong-il, *Juchesasang eui Kibone Daehayeo*, (On the Basis of the *Juche* Idea), Pyongyang,

Park claimed that this approach of Kim's, which viewed the role of religion in a positive light, must be a reference point in developing the *Juche*an perspective on Christianity.³⁰⁶ Park attempted to distinguish the *Juche*an understanding of Christianity from the Marxist view of religion. Firstly, he criticized the Marxist understanding of Christianity, which criticized Christianity as a "fantastic and non- scientific world-view":

The *Juche* idea has a scientific view of knowledge, based on analyzing the objective world. However, it emphasizes even more the demands and needs of people. In this respect, religion also reflects the ontological needs of the people, and has social consciousness as well. Religion does not aim to examine the nature and law of the objective world in scientific language and method. For example, Christianity originated in the context of slavery and the poor in Palestine, among those who struggled for equality and independence against the colonialism of the Roman Empire in the 1st century. Christianity proclaimed a method to realize the hope and dream of the people, and provided a value system and ethic to the people in a religious way. In the Old Testament, the origin of Christianity was not the creation story, but the experience of Exodus of the Hebrew people, who were in slavery in Egypt...Here, we can find that the nature of Christianity is not scientifically stating a world-view, but providing a truth of life for the people in a language of religious experience, promoting freedom and equality against oppression and enslavement. Therefore, it is not of interest to the *Juche* idea to argue whether Christianity is scientific or not, but we need to notice that the origin of Christianity is rooted in people's desire for liberation. Here, the *Jucheans* find that the Christian emphasis on human salvation and liberation has much in common with the *Juche* idea.³⁰⁷

Park suggested that the Marxist-Leninist criticism of Christianity was mistaken because it had criticized the symbolic system of religion on the basis of the criteria employed by science. Park argued that the Marxists and Leninists did not sufficiently distinguish between differences in the language systems used to describe human religious experience, on the other hand, and scientific facts on the other. Therefore, it was irrelevant for them to criticize Christianity based on the basis of scientific value. Rather, he asked the *Jucheans* to pay attention to the liberation tradition of Christianity in their cooperation with the Christians.

Secondly, Park questioned what kind of Christianity Marxists had criticized. He pointed out that the Marxist understood Christianity from the perspective of a single paradigm. However, he claimed that there have been several paradigms of Christianity in church history.³⁰⁸ He

KWP Press, 1986, 189; recited from *Ibid.*, 203.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 204-205.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

suggested the *Jucheans* approach each historical paradigm of Christianity separately in order to evaluate it properly:

Exactly, what the Marxists and Leninists criticized was a form of Christianity that supported the bourgeois, ignored social responsibility, and justified Capitalism. As we well know, Marx condemned Christianity as the opium of the *minjung*, and Lenin defined Christianity as a cheap brandy alcohol, which deceived the *minjung* by speaking of the happiness in the other-world. However, the Christianity, which Marx and Lenin criticized was only one of historical paradigms of Christianity. Therefore, In the *Juche* idea, it is necessary to separately evaluate each paradigm of Christianity, according to the historical development of Christianity; primitive Christianity, the Christianity of Christendom which supported the upper class and the development of capitalism, and modern Christianity.³⁰⁹

He maintained that primitive Christianity was a religion for the *minjung*. This Christianity opposed exploitation, oppression to the poor and the slavery. The *minjung* expressed their vision of a classless society, and the coming of the ideal world, as their messianic faith.³¹⁰ “This primitive Christianity was the original teaching of Christianity, and carried on an authentic Christian mission.”³¹¹ Therefore, he claimed, the Christians who believe this paradigm must not be excluded by the Communists and *Jucheans*.³¹²

However, he understood that the Christianity of Christendom, after the time of Constantine, came to serve the exploiting powers. Often, this Christianity was a religion for the rich, encouraging the *minjung* to obey the existing order in medieval times, and serving later for the development of capitalism. Park suggested that Marx and Lenin mistook this paradigm of Christianity for the whole tradition of Christianity. He argued that it is difficult to cooperate with Christians who believe this paradigm of Christianity. However, he also rejected the generalization that applied this paradigm to the whole of Christianity.³¹³

Lastly, Park drew attention to modern Christianity after the Second World War. He found that it had three characteristics: the development of the ecumenical movement, liberation theology and indigenous theology. “The ecumenical movement has not only strengthened Christianity as a world religion, but also rooted Christianity in local soil and committed it to the struggle of the *minjung* (the suffering people) and the *minjok* (the suffering nation).” Along with the

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 206.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

ecumenical movement, liberation theology too has contributed to the change from the “Christianity of Christendom” to the “Christianity of Third World people”. “Liberation theology turned the Christian interests from the other-world to this-world, from personal salvation to social gospel, and from escaping to participating in reality”.³¹⁴ He also insisted that the development of indigenous theology has contributed to Christian cultural liberation from western Christianity, which had hitherto been considered the only form of Christianity. In addition Park asked the *Juche* scholars to pay special attention to the Christian struggle for the *minjung* and the development of *minjung* theology in South Korea.³¹⁵

With the above analysis of the historical paradigms of Christianity, Park concluded that the *Jucheans* must not mechanically accept the Marxist criticism of Christianity, which was only relevant for the “Christianity of Christendom”. He suggested that the *Jucheans* need to recognize the positive aspects of Christianity, and of the Christian mission for the *minjung* and the *minjok*.³¹⁶ He closed his presentation by suggesting another dialogue between the *Jucheans* in the North and the *minjung* theologians in the South, for the purpose of developing further a reunification theology.³¹⁷

This new perspective suggested by the Director of the Institute for the *Juche* Idea, represented a radical change in *Juche* understanding of Christianity. However, this change was not brought about only by the contribution of a *Juche* scholar; rather, it must be seen as the result of the process of dialogue, and as a response to the Christian challenges that the Christians had raised in their joint consultation with the *Jucheans*. Park’s intervention was also a most important help towards increasing the religious freedom of the North Korean Christians, because one of the best-known *Juche* scholars had now openly introduced a new, positive understanding of Christianity. After Park’s presentation, Ki-jun Koh invited him to become a special lecturer of the Pyongyang Theological Seminary, treating the subject of the *Juche* understanding of Christianity.³¹⁸ Park willingly accepted, and lectured there until he fell victim to a political purge in 1997.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 207-208.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 208-209.

³¹⁸ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

2.2.3 The Results

As a result of the ten years consultation process, the Institute for the *Juche* Idea reported to the KWP its new understanding of Christianity.³¹⁹ Due to this report, in 1992 the statement on Christianity in the *Hyundae Chosun Mal Sajun*, or Dictionary of Modern Korean was rewritten, with the permission of the Department of Culture of the KWP. It is worthwhile to compare the 1992 statement with the previous one of 1981.

In the 1981 edition, the dictionary explained Christianity in the following negative terms:

This religion appeared in the Middle East in the 1st century, believing in Jesus. It preaches people to obey to the ruling class, blinding them about the social problems of inequality and exploitation, through dazzling them with the Heaven.³²⁰

Here, Christianity was described as a negative, anti-revolutionary religion. However, in the 1992 edition, entitled *Chosun Mal Daesajun* or Great Korean Dictionary, the above statement was rewritten as follows:

This religion worships Jesus Christ and believes his teachings. It is a world religion, which originated in the Middle East in the 1st century, under the colonization of the Roman Empire. It preaches if people believe that Jesus, who is the Son of God, died on the Cross and rose again to save human beings, they will enter the Heavenly Kingdom. The main doctrine of Christianity is charity and equality. It divided as the Roman Catholic church and the Eastern Orthodox church in the 11th century, due to the division of the Roman Empire. In Europe, with the emergence of the bourgeoisie, Protestantism separated from Roman Catholicism as a result of reformation in the 16th century. In Protestantism, there are many denominations such as Presbyterian, Methodist etc.³²¹

This later statement on Christianity was certainly rewritten from a neutral position, and even described Christianity positively as a religion of charity and equality. New definitions of Christian terms such as church, resurrection, messiah, pastor, elder, evangelist etc also appeared in the dictionary. These too were rewritten more objectively and concretely, and less negatively than before.³²²

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Hyundae Chosun Mal Sajun*, (Dictionary of Modern Korean), Pyongyang, Bakwasajeon Chulpansa, 1981, 328.

³²¹ *Chosun Mal Daesajun*, (Great Dictionary of Korean), vol.1, Pyongyang, Sahoekwahak Chlpansa, 1992, 413.

³²² Compare, *Hyundae Chosun Mal Sajun*, “church”, 229; “resurrection”, 1235; “messiah”, 245;

However, the most dramatic change in the official *Juche*an understanding of Christianity was not in the dictionary definitions, but in the amendment of the article on religion in the constitution. Article 54 of *The Socialist Constitution* in 1972 had said: “Citizens have freedom of religious belief and freedom of anti-religious propaganda”. However, the reference to the “freedom of anti-religious propaganda” was completely deleted in the *Kim Il Sung Constitution* in 1992. Compared the still existing Article 46 of the Chinese Constitution, which talks about “the citizen’s right to enjoy freedom not to believe in religion,”³²³ the complete deletion of the “freedom of anti-religious propaganda” in North Korea was a remarkable change of religious policy. It is certain that the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue had influenced the above changes.

In addition to the above visible results, both the Christians and the *Juche*ans increased mutual their understanding of each other through the dialogue. The Christians recognized that the *Juche* idea is not merely a sort of materialism, but respects spiritual life as well. The *Juche*ans have learned that Christianity is not now the opium of the people. Rather, they recognized that modern Christianity and Christian mission are committed to the oppressed, the poor, and the marginalized.

Both found that Korean Christianity and the *Juche* idea share a strong concern for the *minjung* and the *minjok*. They also recognized that both were important ideologies leading the struggle of the Korean people for national independence in modern history. This tradition became a historical reference point for developing cooperation between the Christians and the *Juche*ans.

Thirdly, *Juche*an intellectuals have emerged who have understanding and sympathy for the North Korean Christians, especially among the scholars in the Institute for the *Juche* Idea. Dong-kun Hong remembered that after the last consultation in Frankfurt, Prof. Sung-duk Park and Dr. Kum-chul Chun asked him to pray for them. After the prayer, Chun said, “My heart

“pastor”, 958; “elder”, 1702; “evangelist”, 1736, and *Chosun Mal Daesajun*, vol. 1, “church”, 296; “resurrection”, 1482; “messiah”, 316; “pastor”, 1128; vol. 2, “elder”, 88; “evangelist”, 134.

³²³ Concerning criticisms on this article, see, T. Lambert, *The Resurrection of the Chinese Church*, Illinois, SHAW, 1991, 37; with W. Rees-Mogg, “Religious Policy of China”, Interview with Jian Zemin, *The Times*, 18th October 1999. See also, A. Lam, “Recent Changes in China’s Religious Policy”, *Tripod*, vol. 22, 55-61.

became suddenly hot during your prayer”.³²⁴ Park confessed that he was becoming a Christian, and there was a joke calling him “Deacon Park”.³²⁵ Indeed, the dialogue changed the old understanding, and contributed to the formation of a new positive understanding of Christianity among the *Juche*an intellectuals in North Korea.

Despite these positive results, there were some limitations as well. Firstly, although the KCF reported on the dialogue to its constituencies, as the Institute did to the KWP, the influence and spread of the dialogue was limited because most consultations had been held in overseas countries. Secondly, the results of dialogue were not developed into a North Korean theology, as Koh expected in 1981. It has been difficult to develop a North Korean theology because of the lack of intellectual resources within the KCF. Nevertheless, it can be said that the North Korean Christians did start to seek a theological identity in the *Juche*an society, through the dialogue, even if they did not make as much progress as they might have.

To overcome the above limitations, both the Christians and the *Juche*ans expected to develop further dialogue within North Korean territory. However, two unfortunate events prohibited further development. Firstly, because of the terrible famine across North Korea from 1993, the whole society fell into an emergency situation. According to Insik Kim, even the staff members of the KCF had difficulty to get enough food during the famine period.³²⁶ In this circumstance, reopening the dialogue within North Korea has been delayed.

Secondly, when Prof. Jang-yup Hwang³²⁷ left for political asylum in South Korea in February 1997, it was a big blow for the Institute for the *Juche* Idea. Hwang, the founder of the Institute, had been known as “the constructor of the *Juche* idea.” Even as far back as 1977, he had shown interest in developing a dialogue with the Christians.³²⁸ When Hwang became the Foreign Secretary of North Korea in 1984, Sung-duk Park, Hwang’s brother in law,

³²⁴ Dong-kun Hong, *Op. Cit.*, 104.

³²⁵ Interview with Rev. Dr. Dong-kun Hong, 13th April 2001, Los Angeles.

³²⁶ Kim said, even Mrs. Chung, the wife of Chairperson of the KCF was not able to have lunch during the famine period. Interview with Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

³²⁷ Hwang was born in Kangdong, South Pyungan Province. He became a member of the KWP in 1946. He studied law in Japan, and received a PhD from Moscow University. He was Professor of Philosophy in Kim Il Sung University from 1954-1972. He was also the President of the University from 1965-1972. In 1972, he was elected Chairperson of the SPA. He founded the Institute for the *Juche* Idea in 1979. He was the Foreign Secretary of North Korea from 1984 until he left for political asylum to South Korea in February 1997. Concerning him and his thought, see his autobiography, *Namun Yuksa eui Jinri rul Boatta*, (I Saw the Truth of History), Seoul, Hanul, 1999.

³²⁸ “From D. Borrie to P. Potter”, 8th October 1977.

succeeded him in his post as Director of the Institute. Moreover, most staff members of the Institute had been Hwang's students when he was Professor of Philosophy at Kim Il Sung University. However, because of Hwang's flight to the South and attack on Kim Jong-il, Park, and those staff members at the Institute who had been under Hwang's intellectual influence, were politically purged in early 1997. This purge did great damage, preventing the Christians from developing the dialogue because not only was Park a good supporter for the Christians, but he also had a deep knowledge of Christianity as a philosopher. Furthermore, some of the purged staff members were the active participants in the dialogue from the *Juche* side. Fortunately, however, there was no threat to the KCF because the purge aimed simply at removing Hwang's relatives.

2.3 *Juche* and *Minjung*: "The Subject of History"

Minjung theology played an important part in changing the *Juche* understanding of Christianity. It was this theology that gave concrete evidence for Christians' claim that Christianity is a religion for the suffering people and nation in Korea. In response, Sung-duk Park suggested a dialogue between the *minjung* theologians in the South and the *Juche* scholars in the North in 1990. However, because of Park's political purge, his suggestion has not been realized yet. In this section, we will make a comparative examination of one of the most important notions held in common by *minjung* theology and the *Juche* idea, namely "the subject of history". This notion could be a key area of "common ground" in the future encounter between the two systems of thought.

Although one of these systems is a theology, which developed within the climate of the suffering *minjung* during the military dictatorships in South Korea in the 1970s, while the other is a political ideology, which developed within the circumstance of the reconstruction of North Korea after the Korean War and emphasized political independence against China and the Soviet Union during the 1950s, both begin their theological and philosophical argument with the issue of historical subjectivity. The first principle of the *Juche* idea is that "man is the subject of history".³²⁹ On the other hand, the first theological theme of *minjung* theology is "the *minjung* as subject of history".³³⁰

³²⁹ *Kim Il-sung Works*, Pyongyang, Foreign languages Publishing House, vol. 27, 491.

³³⁰ Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung: Christ's Solidarity with the People for New Life*, 5.

This is not a coincidental conjunction but, in both instances, the result of indigenization of foreign ideas. The *Juche* idea should be seen as indigenous Korean Communism, and *minjung* theology as indigenous Korean liberation theology. Both are strongly rooted in traditional Korean philosophies. One of the characteristics of traditional religion and philosophy in Korea is humanism. In the establishment of the Old Chosun Kingdom, the founder, *Tankun*, made the idea of *Hongik Ingan* (弘益人間), or Broad Benefits for Humanity, as the ideological basis of his rule. During the dominance of Buddhism in the Silla and Koryu periods, the idea of *Hokuk Bulkyo* (護國佛教), or Buddhism for the Protection and Benefit of the Nation, was one of the strongest elements in Korean Buddhism. Then during the Chosun dynasty, Confucian humanism dominated Korean thought. At the end of the 19th century, when the indigenous religion *Tonghak* (東學) emerged, its basic philosophical idea was *In Nae Chun* (人乃天), or Heaven is in Humanity. Shamanism, a very influential spiritual force among the Korean people, always emphasized the worldly practical and utilitarian benefit it could provide to the people in their everyday lives.

The two influential modern Korean beliefs, the *Juche* idea and *minjung* theology, do not stand apart from this strong, humanistic tradition of the Korean ethos. Both have links with the traditional humanism of Korean thought through declaring that “man,” or the “*minjung*” are the subject of history. This is a highly important reference point for the dialogue between the *Juche* idea and *minjung* theology, because both have a similarity in their methodology of indigenization as well in their as human-centered approach to history.

We must now examine the question of who is considered to be the subject of history in each of the two systems, beginning with the Christian one. The idea that “the *minjung* is (or are) the subject of history” has been one of the most unique aspects of *minjung* theology.³³¹ The question then arises concerning who the *minjung* are, and why the theologians claim that the *minjung* is the subject of history. The word “*minjung*” is a Korean pronunciation of two Chinese characters: “*min*”(民) and “*jung*”(衆). “*Min*” literally means “the people”; “*jung*” means “the mass.” Combining these two words, we get the idea of “the mass of people”. Yet “*minjung*” is a more inclusive word than the mass. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that there is no single agreed meaning of *minjung* even among the *minjung* theologians

³³¹ See, CTC-CCA ed., *Minjung Theology: People as the Subject of History*, New York, Orbis, 1983.

themselves, because *minjung* movements broke out spontaneously in diverse fields.³³² Most *minjung* theologians have insisted that *minjung* defies any easy definition. They have argued against any conception of *minjung* as a class movement, since the life of the *minjung* cannot be traced exclusively to any one economic, political or cultural group. Nevertheless, it is also true that when one looks at its historical origins, a rough, “rule of thumb” definition of the term emerges as follows: “the *minjung* are those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated socially, and kept uneducated in cultural and intellectual matters”.³³³

When Kim Il-sung firstly proclaimed the *Juche* idea to the public in 1955, he began by noting that “*saram*” is the subject of history.³³⁴ “*Saram*” is a Korean pronunciation of two characters: “*sam*” and “*am*”. “*Sam*” literally means “life”; “*am*” means “awareness.” Combining these two words, *saram* means, “the being that knows the value of life”. However, in practice, *saram* really means “the natural man” in Korean. Therefore, the first principle of the *Juche* idea can be translated as the affirmation that “man is the subject of history”. Kim’s original human-centered understanding in defining historical subjectivity this has similarities with to the traditional Korean thought.

Kim Jong-il later developed the principle that “*inmin daejung* is the subject of history.”³³⁵ “*Inmin*(人民)” is a compound of “*in*” (人) and “*min*” (民). It means literally “the people of the human.” However, Korean Communists used this term “*inmin*” as an equivalent of the term “proletariat.” “*Daejung* (大衆)” is a compound “*dae*” (大) and “*jung*” (衆), which means “the general public”. The concept of “*daejung*” reminds us of a group of people who can be easily manipulated by a ruling class. Kim Jong-il translated “*inmin daejung*” as “the masses of the people.”³³⁶ Here, we can summarize by saying that the literal meanings of *minjung* and *inmin daejung* are similar. Both basically refer to “the mass of people”, who were always considered important, even in traditional Korean thought.

³³² The first official consultation on *minjung* theology was held by the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia at the Christian Academy House, Seoul in 1979. In this consultation, the issue of defining *minjung* was the subject of hot debate. See, Yong-bock Kim ed., *Minjung Theology*, Singapore, CTC-CCA, 1980.

³³³ C. Moon, *A Korean Minjung Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*, New York, Orbis, 1985, 1.

³³⁴ Kim Il-sung, *Selective Writings*, vol. 4, Pyongyang, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1960, 325-354.

³³⁵ See, Kim Jong-il, *On the Juche Idea*, 14.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

At the same time, the *minjung* as the subject of history in minjung theology, does not refer only to “the mass of people.” The concept of *minjung* carries connotations with the history of *minjung* uprisings against the rulers. *Minjung* stands as a symbol of suffering people who resist oppression and exploitation in Korean history. The sufferings and aspirations of the *minjung* are “woven into their story, blending the sad elegy and the song of hope”.³³⁷ This story is a “social biography (history)” of the *minjung*, which is an “intermingling of events, hopes and memories; intertwining of the promise of the future and the disappointment of the present; celebration and suffering; joy and sorrow; forgiveness and guilt; renewal and defeat”.³³⁸ In this social history, the *minjung* are the subject, and their story is viewed as the center of history.

Such a view of history stands in contrast to that in which the leader, ruler, hero or ruling system is regarded as the historical subject.³³⁹ However, in historical reality, the *minjung* do not become the real subject of history, but are defined and determined by the ruling system. Thus the status of the *minjung* is that of the “ruled”, and their historical experience is one of suffering. Therefore, it is important that the *minjung* be the people who are conscious of their unjust situation, and who are ready to be involved in a *minjung* movement in order to change the *status quo*. According to Kim Yong-bock, through their commitment to the *minjung* movement for the transformation of history, the *minjung* experience a sudden intervention of the Messianic Kingdom which exists in the future, yet already enters into the present historical reality, so that the *minjung* themselves now become the subject of history.³⁴⁰ In other words, the importance of human leadership in the *minjung* movement is restricted in *minjung* theology. Rather, divine guidance through the intervention of “Messianic politics” change the *minjung*, who dare to get involved in the transformation of history, as a new subject of history.

On the other hand, the conception of *inmin daejung* as the subject of history is not simply “the masses of people” as well. Rather, it is an expanded conception of the proletariat. As we already noted, in the *Juche* idea, the master of socialist construction is man, the master of one’s fate is oneself. The power to control one’s fate rests with no-one other than oneself.

³³⁷ Yong-bock Kim, *Theology and the Social Biography of the Minjung*, *CTC Bulletin*, vol. 5, No. 3, 1984, 67.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Yong-bock Kim, *Messiah and Minjung*, 5-6.

³⁴⁰ Yong-bock Kim, *Theology and the Social Biography of the Minjung*, 67.

Therefore, man should not be subjected to the enslavement of economic poverty, political subjugation, or military domination by others. Hence, *Chajusung* or the “self-independence” of man should never be manipulated by external powers and conditions. When a man, or the mass of people is enslaved, *Uisiksung* or the spiritual consciousness calls the *inmin daejung* (the masses of the people) to struggle for the recovery of their mastership over their own life and society.³⁴¹ The *Juche* idea thus defines the socio-historical movement as an independent and creative movement of the *inmin daejung*. Through this process of ontological and social awakening, and their initiating the socio-historical movement, the *inmin daejung* are changed into the subject of history. In the *Juche* idea, the *inmin daejung* is thus a community of people who have the *Uisiksung* required for the transformation of social history. To be the subject of history, the *inmin daejung* must be eager to defend their *Chajusung*.³⁴² Nevertheless, the *inmin daejung* are able to fulfill their role as the subject of history “only under correct leadership”.³⁴³ Here, the role of the personal leadership of *Suryung*, or the Great Leader, the commander of revolutionary struggle, was emphasized.

From the above comparison, it is clear that both *minjung* theology and the *Juche* idea begin with the question of historical subjectivity. The *minjung* and *inmin daejung* are defined as the subject of history. Literally, both the *minjung* and *inmin daejung* mean the same, “the mass of people”. As a theological term and as a philosophical term, each carry a similar meaning, referring to the people of community who have been politically oppressed, economically exploited, and socially alienated, who have the consciousness needed to engage in socio-historical transformation, and who have committed themselves to the *minjung* movement or to the socio-historical movement. Both beliefs link up with the traditional Korean concern for the people who suffer. Both also have also a methodological similarity, stressing indigenization when developing either Korean theology or Korean Communism. This “common ground” is a remarkable basis for the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue and for working together for the suffering *minjung* or for the *inmin daejung*.

However, in spite of the similarities, there is also discontinuity between the two concepts. It is impossible to identify the the *minjung* and the *inmin daejung* with each other in any absolute way because while the notion of *minjung* has been formed in the long history and culture of

³⁴¹ See, *Exposition of the Juche Idea*, 40.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17.

the *minjung* movement, *inmin daejung* has a socio-classical meaning in relation to the proletariat. When the *minjung* are referred to as the subject of history in Christianity, they are a relative, not an absolute entity. The history of suffering of the *minjung* is transformed into the history of hope through “the sudden intervention of Messianic Kingdom”. By this intervention, the “social biography of the *minjung*” is renewed, and the *minjung* are changed into a new being.³⁴⁴

By contrast, from this *minjung* Christian perspective, there are dangers in the notion of *inmin daejung*. In particular, the internal movement within history and the rule of the *inmin daejung* may be regarded as absolute. We already criticized the *Juche* idea for introducing a view of human moral ability that was too strongly optimistic. In the *Juche* idea, the *inmin daejung* are able to realize their own self-salvation through the socio-historical movement. While the conception of *minjung* is open to, and inclusive of others, through recognizing the ontological limitation of the *minjung* and the need for divine guidance of the *minjung* movement, the conception of *inmin daejung*, which refers to an expanded proletariat, can nevertheless easily be exclusive of the other social classes. This is a fundamental difference between the two belief systems.

The conception and role of leadership is also different in each of the two systems. *Minjung* theology has developed through the struggle against Korean military dictatorship. Therefore, *minjung* theology emphasizes the decentralization of power. It sees secular power, whoever is in command, as relative power, and believes that the sovereignty of God is the only absolute power. Even in the traditional *minjung* uprisings, such as *Tonghak*, connecting with the divine power had been a highly important matter in order to gather the support of the *minjung*. Therefore, *minjung* theologians emphasize divine guidance in the *minjung* movement.

However, in the *Juche* idea, the leadership of *Suryung* has the same importance as the *inmin daejung*. It is emphasized that “only” through the guidance of the *Suryung*, who is the brain of the *inmin daejung*, can the revolutionary movement succeed. There is surely a danger here of the *inmin daejung* being regarded as a simple passive follower of the *Suryung* in the movement. Moreover, if there is no real democracy or fairness in selecting the *Suryung*, it would be easy for the leader to dominate, rule with absolute power and even force the people

³⁴⁴ Yong-bock Kim, *Op. Cit.*

to worship him. This problem of leadership will be the most sensitive subject matter in any dialogue between Christianity and the *Juche* idea. So far, it seems that the North Korean Christians have intentionally avoided arguing this matter out in their dialogue with the *Jucheans*. However, if the *minjung* theologian-*Juche*an dialogue is open, the *minjung* theologians must strongly challenge the notion of the *Suryung*. The issue of the *Suryung* will be a dilemma for the North Korean Christians in the future. As political changes take place in North Korea in the future, the public opinion of the northern *minjung* will need to be read carefully and examined theologically.

In conclusion, through our comparative study of the notion of historical subjectivity in both *minjung* theology and the *Juche* idea, it seems clear that a dialogue between the two systems would help the North Korean Christians to develop a North Korean theology, in their *Juche*an society. The Christian-*Juche*an dialogue took place on the grounds of a commonly-affirmed humanism, rooted in Korean culture. This was aided by the fact that both were seeking to indigenize their respective ideologies: *Juche* indigenizes scientific socialism, separating it from its Russian and Chinese models: *minjung* theology, developing at the same time in South Korea, was embraced by the KCF as a Third World theology that made the dialogue possible.

3. External Renewals

In this section, we will examine the way the South Korean and the world churches renewed their approach to the North Korean issue. Their renewed approaches also contributed to the revival and renewal of the Protestant Christianity in North Korea.

3.1 The 88 Declaration: Renewal of the South Korean Church

During the Korean War, the South Korean churches portrayed the Communists and the pro-Communist Christians in North Korea as an “irreconcilable Satan.” The war was therefore justified as a just war by the southern churches. These churches also rejected the armistice that brought hostilities to an end, and insisted on fighting until “wiping” all the Korean Communists “out of the world”.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ Korea Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, “The Statement to the Second Full

However, a new approach emerged within the South Korean churches during the 1980s. In the 1970s, certain Christians who were often termed “progressive” Christians had developed the *Sun Minju Hu Tongil* (先民主後統一), or Democracy First and Reunification Second Policy in their struggle against dictatorship. Part of the purpose of this policy was to avoid an ideological attack from the government, with the military dictators condemning the Christians as pro-Communist. However, after the Kwangju massacre in May 1980, the Christians realized that the issues of democracy and reunification could not be separated in the Korean context. General Chun Doo-hwan and his followers accused the Kwangju people, who had demonstrated against him, of being pro-Communist, and killed about one thousand civilians there. After this terrible massacre, the NCKK began to criticize the military dictatorship in South Korea for perpetuating the division of the Korean peninsula. The NCKK understood that the South Korean dictatorship manipulated the mass psychology with anti-Communist political propaganda. This propaganda attempted to convince people of the danger of the North Korean Red Army, using this as an excuse to prevent demonstrations for democracy from taking place in the South.³⁴⁶

The NCKK began its work for Korean reunification through holding a consultation on the subject with the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD) in 1981. The division between East and West Germany had some similarities with the situation on the Korean peninsula. At the consultation, both churches discussed their common issue, the reunification of their divided nations, and decided to establish Reunification Committees in their structures.³⁴⁷ However, when the NCKK attempted to launch the activity of their committee through holding a public consultation on Korean reunification in 1983, the South Korean military government banned it. The government disallowed any civil or public discussion of the issue.³⁴⁸ Because of this obstacle, the NCKK asked the WCC to negotiate with the North Korean Christians in order to set up a direct meeting with them. The request was made at the

Meeting of the CCIA”, Chicago University, 1954.

³⁴⁶ NCKK, “Declaration of the Korean Churches on Peaceful Reunification: The Statement of the Thirty Fourth General Assembly”, 28th February 1985.

³⁴⁷ NCKK and EKD, “Joint Statement of the Fourth Consultation Between the Korean and German Churches”, 10th June 1981.

³⁴⁸ At first, the government allowed the consultation to be held with the condition of not holding it in public, not to inviting foreign participants, and not issuing any statement. However, the KCIA confined the members of the Committee in their houses, barricaded the meeting venue, and sent a fabricated letter, which informed the participants that the consultation was canceled. See, NCKK, “Statement on Disturbing the Consultation on Reunification”, 16th June 1983.

Tozanso Conference in 1984. The purpose was to defy the reunification policy of the military government, which disallowed any civil contacts with North Koreans.³⁴⁹ At the request of the NCKK, the WCC thus invited delegations from the northern and southern churches to Glion, Switzerland in 1985, 1988 and 1990, to promote reconciliation between North and South Korean Christians.

Through this process, the NCKK reached a new understanding not only of the issue of reunification, but also of Christianity in North Korea. Finally, in 1988, the NCKK held the International Christian Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea, 25th-29th April, at Inchon, in order to establish a new policy on reunification.³⁵⁰ In this consultation, the NCKK issued an historic statement called the "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace", which is known in Korea as the "88 Declaration".³⁵¹

A new theological understanding of the division of Korean peninsula emerged in this Declaration, which said:

Jesus Christ came to this land as the "Servant of Peace" (Ephesians 2:13-19), to proclaim within division, conflict and oppression God's Kingdom of peace, reconciliation and liberation (Luke 4:18; John 14:27). Jesus Christ suffered, died upon the Cross, was buried, and rose in the Resurrection to reconcile humanity to God, to overcome divisions and conflicts, and to liberate all people and make them one (Acts 10:36-40). Jesus Christ blessed the peacemakers and called them the children of God (Matthew 5:9). We believe that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the eschatological future of history, will make us one, and enable us to become partners in God's mission (John 14:18-21; 16:13-14; 17:11). We believe that all of us who are members of the churches of Korea have been called to labor as apostles of peace (Colossians 3:15). God has commanded the Korean churches to undertake the mission of overcoming today's harsh reality of our one people divided north and south in confrontation, and we are thus obligated to work for the realization of unification and peace (Matthew 5:23-24).³⁵²

The South Korean churches, which had justified the Korean War as a just war, now began to change their theological understanding. Instead of inserting the just war theory into the

³⁴⁹ The Glion Process was a direct meeting and cooperation process between the NCKK and the KCF mediated by the WCC-CCIA. See Kyung-seo Park, *Reconciliation, Reunification*, Hong Kong, CCA, 1998, 60-70; "The Glion Statement", NCKK, KCF and WCC, 1988.

³⁵⁰ Concerning the Consultation, see, NCKK ed., *Report of the International Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea, April 25-29, 1988*, Inchon, Korea, Seoul, NCKK, 1988.

³⁵¹ See, Appendix G.

³⁵² NCKK, "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace", 29th February 1988, 1-2.

Korean context, they now emphasized instead the doctrine of reconciliation, for the peace of Korea. The NCKK affirmed that Jesus came into the world for the reconciliation of divided peoples and nations. It declared that the churches in Korea were called by God to witness to the mission of peace and reconciliation between the two divided Koreas. Based on this theological understanding, the NCKK then went on to confess the sin of Korean Christians who had given in to hatred of each other, in the context of division:

...we confess before God and our people that we have sinned; we have long harbored a deep hatred and hostility toward the other side within the structure of division... We have been guilty of the sin of violating God's commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-40). Because of the division of our homeland, we have hated, deceived and murdered our blood compatriots, and have compounded this sin through political and ideological justification. Division has led to war, yet we Christians have committed the sin of endorsing the reinforcement of troops and further rearmament with the newest and most powerful weapons in the name of preventing another war (Psalms 33:16-20; 44:6-7)... We confess that during the course of our national division the churches of Korea have not only remained silent and repeatedly ignored the ongoing movement for the autonomous reunification of our people, but have further sinned by trying to justify the division... We confess that the Christians of the south especially have sinned by making a virtual religious idol out of anti-Communist ideology and have thus not been content merely to treat the Communist regime in the north as the enemy, but have gone further and damned our northern compatriots and others whose ideology differs from our own (John 13:14-15; 4:20-21).³⁵³

Here, the South Korean churches overcame the ideology, which justified the system of dividing Korea. They repented from regarding the North Korean Communists as "unforgivable devils".³⁵⁴ Furthermore, the NCKK declared that the Communists are "compatriots", who merely have a different ideology, not an enemy. This statement was a remarkable cornerstone for a new approach to North Korea not only for the South Korean churches, but also for the whole society.

Next, a new approach to the churches in North Korea was also mapped out. The Declaration contained a message to the South Korean churches that the KCF was not an "enemy"; rather, they were "sisters and brothers in faith".³⁵⁵ The NCKK prayed for "God's grace and blessing upon our sisters and brothers who steadfastly endure in their faith even under difficult circumstances."³⁵⁶ Besides recognizing the authenticity of the KCF and the house churches in

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁵⁴ Korea Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, *Op. Cit.*

³⁵⁵ NCKK, "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace", 4.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

North Korea, the NCCK also stated its intention to establish direct exchanges with the northern Christians for the purpose of reconciliation:

The mission calling to peace and reunification is the universal task of all Christians on the Korean peninsula, the churches of South Korea will pray for the faith and life of the Christian community in the north, and will work for north-south exchanges between our churches.³⁵⁷

However, this statement brought enormous reactions from the conservative churches. The main arguments against the statement were the reaffirmation of the old understanding that the KCF is not a genuine Christian organization, but a political propaganda organization of the North Korean Communists. Some even insisted that the NCCK had become pro-Communist. They recommended their General Assemblies to withdraw from membership of NCCK. These reactions were influenced by the McCarthyism of the South Korean dictators. Here are some examples:

Table 11) Reaction Statements against the NCCK Declaration

Organization	Date	Quotation
KPDA	March/88	Even though the NCCK recognizes the KCF, we know that churches were utterly destroyed by the Communists in North Korea.
CBAK	22/03/88	We declare that the KCF is a propaganda organization of Kim Il-sung's believers who persecuted and killed many Christian believers.
NEA	12/04/88	It is obvious that there is no church in North Korea.
Yongrak Church	17/04/88	The KCF is not a religious organization.
KCASNR	19/04/88	We are sure that there are underground churches in North Korea. However, we express our alarm at the opinion, which recognizes the KCF as a church.
ESP-PCK	July/88	We oppose the NCCK statement. At the same time, we recommend to the General Assembly to cease any cooperation with NCCK.
PP-PCK	25/07/88	We cannot support the NCCK's direction on the issue of reunification, and recommend seceding from the NCCK.
PB & HHP-PCK	July/88	The house churches in North Korea were built for the purpose of Communist propaganda. We recommend that the PCK withdraw from membership of NCCK.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

KPDA: Korean Protestant Denominations Association, **CBAK:** Christian Businessmen's Association in Korea, **NEA:** National Elders Association, **KCASNR:** Korean Christian Association for South and North Relationship, **ESP-PCK:** East Seoul Presbytery-PCK, **PP-PCK:** Pyongyang Presbytery-PCK, **PB & HHP-PCK:** Pyongbuk and Hamhoe Presbytery-PCK

In spite of these criticisms, the mainline churches in South Korea supported the NCK's approach. The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) was the first to issue a supportive statement on the Declaration at its General Assembly meeting in 1988.³⁵⁸ The PCK, the largest denomination in Korea, also accepted the NCK's direction³⁵⁹ in spite of the oppositions of some presbyteries, which had evacuated from the North.³⁶⁰ Lastly, the annual conference of the Korean Methodist Church (KMC) also endorsed the Declaration.³⁶¹

The 88 Declaration contained not only a new approach to the Christians and the Communists in North Korea, but also a proposal for launching a Christian reunification movement.³⁶² The NCK proclaimed the year 1995, fifty years after the partition of Korean peninsula, the "Jubilee Year for Peace and the Reunification".³⁶³ This expressed the belief of Korean Christians that "the God who rules all history has been present within these fifty years of our history, and proclaims our firm resolution to bring about the restoration of the covenanted community of peace in the history of the Korean peninsula today".³⁶⁴ Through proclaiming the Jubilee, the South Korean churches affirmed their commitment to God's mission interpreted as calling for the reunification. The KCF warmly welcomed the above new

³⁵⁸ "We fully support the Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification..." PROK, "General Assembly's Statement on Peaceful Reunification of Korea", September 1988.

³⁵⁹ See, PCK, "PCK General Assembly's Statement on Peaceful Reunification of Korean Peninsula", 17th September 1991. Because of the reaction of the above presbyteries their support delayed until 1991.

³⁶⁰ Especially, the East Seoul Presbytery, Pyongyang Presbytery, Pyongbuk and Hanhoe Presbytery strongly rejected the declaration. See, the table of Reaction Statements against the NCK declaration.

³⁶¹ See, KMC, "The Statement of Korean Methodists to Realize Peaceful Reunification", 9th October 1991.

³⁶² For the detailed proposals of the movement, see, NCK, "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification", 10-13.

³⁶³ "The 'jubilee year' is the fiftieth year following the completion of a 49 year cycle of seven sabbatical years (Leviticus 25:8-10). The jubilee year is a 'year of liberation.' The proclamation of the jubilee year is an act of God's people which reveals their unshaking trust in God's sovereignty over history and their faithfulness in keeping God's sovereignty over history and their faithfulness in keeping God's covenant. The jubilee year is a time during which the covenant community of unity and peace is restored through the establishing of shalom based upon God's justice. This is seen in the liberation of the enslaved through the overcoming of all social and economic conflicts resulting from internal or external repression and absolutist power: indebtedness is forgiven, sold land is restored to its original tillers, and seized homes are returned to their original inhabitants (Leviticus 25:11-55)." NCK, *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

approach of the South Korean churches.³⁶⁵ The Declaration was welcomed by the Communists as well. For example, Radio Pyongyang welcomed and publicized the Declaration across North Korea.³⁶⁶

Indeed, the Declaration was an historic statement, which brought a renewal to the southern churches. This renewal included a recognition of the Communists as compatriots, as well as respecting the tradition of North Korean Christianity. It demonstrated remarkable support for the revival and renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea.

3.2 The Moscow Policy Statement: Renewed Approach of the WCC

The WCC had originally supported the UN's police measure, *de facto* the US' military intervention in the Korean War, by making the Toronto Statement in 1950. This support increased the isolation of Christians in North Korea, because the Communists then condemned Christianity as an imperialistic religion.³⁶⁷ However, the WCC and the KCF have come to developing closer relationship since the days of the Tozanso Conference. Therefore, the WCC found it necessary to reconsider its former approach to North Korea. E. Weingartner describes the atmosphere of WCC in the early 1980s, when he began to contact the KCF as follows:

Opening lines of communication with an isolated North Korea meant suspending judgment and accepting responsibility. And the WCC bore a special responsibility (because of its) support for the United Nations action during the Korean War...³⁶⁸

The WCC felt some responsibility for the Korean War, and by the 1980s some signs of changes in its approach were appearing. It wanted to establish a new relationship with the North Korean Christians. However, despite the significance of the Tozanso resolution,³⁶⁹ WCC was still not clear how to renew its approach to North Korea in 1984. It was only at the

³⁶⁵ See, NCKK, KCF and WCC, "Glion Declaration on Peace and Reunification of Korea", Glion, Switzerland, 25th November 1988.

³⁶⁶ E. Weingartner, "The Tozanso Process: An Ecumenical Contribution to the Struggle for Peace and Justice in North-East Asia", in CCIA ed., *Peace and the Reunification of Korea*, Geneva, WCC, 1990, 26.

³⁶⁷ Concerning the Toronto Statement, see, Chapter V Section 2.3.1.

³⁶⁸ E. Weingartner, "The Tozanso Process: Ecumenical Efforts for Korean Reconciliation and Reunification", in G. Baum and H. Wells ed., *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches*, Geneva, WCC, 1997, 68.

³⁶⁹ Concerning the Tozanso conference, see, chapter VI Section 5.

Moscow Central Committee Meeting of 1989, that the WCC declared a new policy statement on North Korea. This statement³⁷⁰ consisted of two parts, "Background" and "Peace and the Reunification of Korea". In the introduction, the WCC remembered with regret the Toronto statement and its original support for the UN's police measure during the Korean War:

Unfortunately, these initiatives came under considerable criticism as being biased towards Western and South Korean positions. Support for the United Nations meant in effect supporting the role of USA, whose military forces fought in the Korean War under the United Nations flag and still make up the bulk of the United Nations General Command.

An unfortunate consequence of this position was the resignation of Mr. T. C. Chao, president of the WCC from China, and withdrawal of the member churches in China from participation in the WCC. It also meant lack of possibility of contacts with the Christian community in North Korea.³⁷¹

This self-criticism of the WCC thirty-nine years after the statement it made at its Toronto Central Committee, went in exactly the same line as the warning J. Hromádka had issued in 1950.³⁷² The WCC went on further:

The WCC confesses that it has not always dealt equitably with the Korean question. Mistakes of the past should weigh on the conscience of the ecumenical community and intensify our determination to struggle for peace and reunification of Korea.³⁷³

Although it took almost half of a century for this regret about its role in the Korean War to be expressed, this statement of the WCC demonstrates remarkable progress in the ecumenical movement. The WCC did not forget its responsibility, and confessed the "mistakes of the past". The WCC listened to the voice of conscience, from within, as the Vancouver Assembly had demanded:

The churches today are called to confess anew their faith, and to repent for the time when Christians have remained silent in the face of injustice or threats to peace. The biblical vision of peace with justice for all, of wholeness, of unity for all God's people, is not one of several options for followers of Christ. It is an imperative in our time.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ The title of the statement is "Peace and the Reunification of Korea", WCC Central Committee, Moscow, 16th-27th 1989, Document No. 2.4. See, Appendix G.

³⁷¹ *Ibid*, "Background", 1-2.

³⁷² See, "From Hromádka to Visser't Hooft", 30th November 1950 in the Appendixes of this thesis.

³⁷³ WCC, "Peace and the Reunification of Korea: Policy Statement", Moscow, 16th-27th 1989, Document No. 2.4, 1.

³⁷⁴ WCC, "Statement on Peace and Justice", Vancouver Assembly, 1983.

In 1950, the WCC accepted only the Western and South Korean position on the Korean War. It condemned North Korea for causing the war, and ending peace on the Korean peninsula, under the influence of J. F. Dulles and R. Niebuhr.³⁷⁵ However, the WCC now realized that the positions it had taken were carried through without proper criticism of the injustices of South Korea and the US government and their past in the outbreak of the Korean War. Finally, based on the Vancouver spirit, the WCC confessed that the Toronto Statement was a “mistake”.

With this confession, the WCC renewed its policy on Korea, so that it now emphasized peace and the reunification of Korea. In its statement, the WCC first of all reaffirmed the Tozanso principles of ecumenical coordination in these pursuits. Hence, it commended the efforts of many churches and ecumenical organizations, which had already engaged actively and responsibly in pursuing contacts with Christians in North Korea.³⁷⁶ Secondly, the WCC warmly welcomed and supported the 88 Declaration of the NCKK. In line with the Declaration, the WCC also renewed its position on the KCF, recognizing it as the representative Protestant Christian organization in North Korea. The WCC commended the KCF for “its active participation in the ecumenical efforts for peace and the reunification of Korea”.³⁷⁷ Lastly, the WCC instructed the CCIA to continue to monitor and analyze the situations in “both” parts of Korea, as well as developments in the region at large and in the international community of nations as far as the Korean issue was concerned. The CCIA was also requested to engage itself actively in the UN for the promotion of peace and the reunification of Korea, and not to offer any more support for the police measure.³⁷⁸ This change of position can be called the renewal of WCC on North Korea.

The statement also included eight priority considerations to assist member churches and related agencies to initiate, or redouble efforts so that they could persuade their respective governments to review their Korea policies. Here are some examples of the priority considerations:

³⁷⁵ Concerning the role of Dulles and Niebuhr in issuing the Toronto Statement, see, Chapter V Section 2.3.2 and 3.3.

³⁷⁶ WCC, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea: Policy Statement”, 1.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

1. The people of Korea should be the ultimate subjects in decisions affecting their future, without outside interference or tutelage.³⁷⁹

The WCC had learned its lesson, after having originally justified the foreign intervention in Korea at Toronto.

The WCC went on further to say that:

3. The reunification process should respect and recognize the reality of the two existing autonomous systems in the spirit of peaceful coexistence, with the objective of building up one unified country.³⁸⁰

The WCC, which had supported the US' condemning North Korea as a "Communist devil," now declared that North Korea is South Korea's partner for coexistence. Moreover, the WCC recommended the UN to renew its position on North Korea:

7. A fresh, truly impartial initiative should be launched by the United Nations in an effort to rectify its historical legacy of bias and complicity in Korea's division.³⁸¹

The WCC also sought to apply the same balanced approach to its own activity in regard to its Christian constituency in the whole Korean peninsula. Hence, it recommended that its own future policy should be to:

1. Establish or maintain contact with churches and Christians in both parts of Korea. Such contacts should promote the building of confidence between North and South by providing first-hand information, thus contributing to an atmosphere of trust and reconciliation.³⁸²

The WCC, which recognized its mistake, now committed itself to be a catalyst of mutual trust between the Christians in North and South Korea. In this role of catalyst, the WCC carefully considered the KCF:

2. In planning contacts and visits to North Korea, it is important to respect the non-denominational character of Christian life there...Visits should be ecumenical both in composition and sponsorship. Visits should be followed up, where possible, with

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

reciprocal invitations to North Korean Christians. Churches in socialist countries carry a special burden in helping North Korean Christians to overcome their isolation.³⁸³

Unlike the Toronto Statement, the Moscow Statement gave full consideration to the North Korean Christians. The WCC now respected the tradition of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. In Toronto, the voice from the churches in Communist countries was intentionally ignored. However, in Moscow, the churches in “socialist countries” were respected in dealing with North Korean issues. In addition to this, it became part of the future plan to publish information about Korea, engage in biblical and theological peace education on the division of Korea, and make efforts on behalf of the separated families.³⁸⁴

Moreover, the Moscow Statement was adopted with the full participation of both the KCF and the NCKK.³⁸⁵ N. Koshy, the director of the CCIA, explained the historical significance of this participation of the Korean churches: “The fact that in Moscow for the first time church representatives from North and South Korea attended the same large ecumenical conference with the knowledge and approval of their governments was a remarkable achievement”.³⁸⁶ In the Moscow Central Committee, Ki-jun Ko, the general secretary of the KCF, thanked the WCC for its efforts on behalf of the Korean issue during the past years, and welcomed the statement.³⁸⁷ Whereas the Toronto Statement in 1950 had brought serious controversy, withdrawal of membership, and the resignation of one of presidents of WCC, in Moscow in 1989, the statement was approved unanimously with all delegates voting in favor. Later, Ko remembered the atmosphere in Moscow as follows:

We cannot forget the impressive scene of the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC held in Moscow. The declaration on the Korean question was adapted unanimously and the Conference Hall reverberated with enthusiastic applause on the historic occasion. Various personages of the WCC including General Secretary Emilio Castro and Ninan Koshy, Director of International Affairs, and church

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁸⁴ See, *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ N.B., There were two Central Committee members from South Korea, Hyung-tae Kim and Jun-young Kim, as well as two representatives from North Korea, Ki-jun Ko and Chul Lee with invitation of WCC general secretary.

³⁸⁶ Recited from M. McClellan, “The World Council of Churches And the Reunification of Korea”, in N. Koshy ed., *Peace And the Reunification of Korea*, Geneva, WCC, 1990, 7.

³⁸⁷ On behalf of the South Korean churches, Rev. Dr. Hyung-tae Kim, the moderator of PCK and Chairperson of the Reunification Committee of NCKK, also added word of thanks to the WCC adopting the statement. *Ibid.*, 9-10.

delegates of various countries gave us warm embraces expressing their joy and congratulations.³⁸⁸

The policy statement on “Peace and the Reunification of Korea” of the WCC at its Moscow Central Committee represents a renewal in the WCC’s relationship with North Korea. This statement was the highlight of WCC’s journey with and for the North Korean churches.

3.3 The NCCCUSA Policy Statement and Renewal of the US Churches

When the Korean War broke, at first, the WCC asked for mediation by the UN.³⁸⁹ However, it was the FCC, the former name of what later became the NCCCUSA, which was the first Christian organization to support the US police action in Korea.³⁹⁰ Based on the FCC’s statement, J. F. Dulles lobbied the CCIA commissioners to support the US’ military intervention in Korea at the Second Central Committee Meeting of the WCC in Toronto.³⁹¹ However, in the 1980s, the NCCCUSA performed a prophetic role for the renewal of the world churches in approaching the North Korean issue. Even before the 88 Declaration and the WCC Moscow Statement, the NCCCUSA declared its policy statement, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea”, on 6th November 1986, which became an important reference for the statements that subsequently followed. Therefore, although the NCCCUSA policy statement was issued prior to 1988, it will be studied in this chapter.

When the reunification movement began among the South Korean Christians, the NCCCUSA felt responsibility for the division of Korea because of its original support for the police action.³⁹² Therefore, the NCCCUSA eagerly participated in the Tozanso process.³⁹³ Indeed, the NCCCUSA responded to the Tozanso initiative in two ways. One was by supporting the reunification movement of the South Korean churches, for example, when it held the North American Ecumenical Conference on the Unification of Korea in 1985.³⁹⁴ The other was by

³⁸⁸ Ki-jun Ko, “Bumper Harvest of Ecumenical Movement: In the Sacred Road for Peace and Reunification of Korea”, *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁸⁹ See, Chapter V, Section 2.3.1.

³⁹⁰ See, Chapter V, Section 2.3.3.

³⁹¹ See, Chapter V, Section 2.3.2.

³⁹² See, NCCCUSA, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea: A Policy Statement of National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.”, 6th November 1986, 2-4.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

creating relationships with the North Korean churches. For this purpose, from 18th April - 3rd May 1986, delegates of the NCCCUSA visited North Korea for the first time ever.³⁹⁵

After Tozanso, the NCCCUSA recognized the need to renew its approach on Korea. H. L. Gible described the process of the statement as follows:

Given the key role that the USA has played in the division of Korea and the tension of the region, the NCCCUSA began work toward a policy statement on Peace and the Unification of Korea and took the initiative, with the Canadian Council of Churches, to call a follow-up regional conference to Tozanso on Korean-related issues and concerns. This conference took place in December, 1985, at Stony Point, New York. Following the conference, NCCCUSA named a committee to begin drafting a policy statement with the mandate that members of the committee, after working on a preliminary draft, visit Christians and government leaders in both North and South Korea to consult and to receive reactions and suggestions from these persons regarding the substance of the policy statement.³⁹⁶

In order to draft the statement with a balanced perspective, the NCCCUSA consulted both North and South Korean Christians as well.

In its statement, NCCCUSA began with confessing that the division of Korea is the “consequences of our failures”.³⁹⁷ The NCCCUSA said:

The churches too have much to confess. Korea has suffered from uncritical acceptance by many in our churches and nation of the virulent anti-Communism which gripped our society hard in the 1950s and has kept it in its grasp to varying degrees ever since. Many Christians not only acquiesced to the division of Korea after World War II, but provided theological and ideological justification for it. Churches in this nation have too often allowed fear of societies different from our own to overshadow our vocation to be reconcilers.³⁹⁸

Here, the NCCCUSA completely changed its view from the one it had held in the 1950s. The NCCCUSA surely criticized itself in regard to on its theological justification of the division of Korea.³⁹⁹ The NCCCUSA also regretted its prejudice against the Christians in North Korea:

³⁹⁵ Concerning the visit, see, H. L. Gible, “A Report on the Visits and Consultations of a NCCCUSA Delegation in the Democratic People’s of Korea and Republic of Korea in the Interest of ‘Peace and the Unification of Korea’: For Internal Staff Briefing Only”, 2nd June 1986.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹⁷ NCCCUSA, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea: A Policy Statement of National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.”, 8.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁹⁹ Concerning the role of R. Niebuhr in relation to the Korean War, see, Chapter V, section 3.1.

We have been too quick to judge the faith of Christians in North Korea from whom we have long been separated by political division, and whose witness to the faith we did not know. Nor have we sought sufficiently to comprehend the witness to the Gospel of the South Korean churches in their society, or to respond adequately to their call to us to be more responsible as U.S. Christians in relation to Korea.⁴⁰⁰

The NCCCUSA concluded, "God has not left this (North Korean) people without witnesses".⁴⁰¹ Furthermore, the NCCCUSA recognized the KCF as the representative national federation of the Protestant Christians in North Korea.⁴⁰² Although it had taken thirty-six years for the NCCCUSA to change its understanding of Christianity in North Korea, this was an extraordinary statement, which was the first declaration of a renewal of policy on North Korea among the world churches. The statement also recommended highly significant future policies for advocacy and action. Here are the examples of how much the political approach of the NCCCUSA toward Korean peninsula had changed in its 1986 statement, compared to its earlier one in 1950:

The NCCCUSA shall press for the negotiated withdrawal of all U.S. nuclear weapons in, and all U.S. and U.S.S.R. nuclear weapons targeted on Korea.⁴⁰³

The NCCCUSA urges the United States to extricate itself from its commanding role in R.O.K. military affairs and its dominance over the political and economic life in order to achieve a climate in which productive talks could take place on the basis of mutual respect for the independence of the other.⁴⁰⁴

The NCCCUSA urges the United States to withdraw from commanding the U.N. peace-keeping operation at the Demilitarized Zone in Korea in favor of mutually acceptable neutral nations, in order to free that world body more adequately to fulfill its current mandate and explore appropriate alternative roles.⁴⁰⁵

The NCCCUSA, which had once called for US military intervention to Korea, now stood in the frontline advocating the withdrawal of the US military in South Korea. Although the statement expressed the above radical view, the Governing Board of the NCCCUSA, representing thirty-two member communions, adopted the statement by 154 for, 0 against, and 18 abstentions on 6th November 1986.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁰ NCCCUSA, *Op. Cit.*, 10.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

This statement thus received the support of the mainline US churches which have had historical missionary links with the Korean churches. Firstly, the Presbyterian Church (USA) expressed its support for the statement by adopting the Resolution on Reconciliation and Reunification in Korea at its General Assembly in 1986.⁴⁰⁷ Next year, the United Church of Christ (USA) and the United Methodist Church, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) also issued similar statements in their highest decision making structures.⁴⁰⁸ This movement in favors of the new approach, which had been started by the NCCCUSA statement, spread to the historically related churches in other parts of the world such as the Canadian, Australian, and Japanese churches.⁴⁰⁹

The above renewal of the US churches was welcomed not only by the Christians, but also by the Communists in North Korea. One of the main purposes of the second official visit of the NCCCUSA delegation to North Korea from 19th June - 3rd July 1987 was “to inform officially the churches and governments of Korea about the contents of the policy statement.”⁴¹⁰ The North Korean Christians and the Communist officials welcomed the statement. The Vice-President of North Korea, Sung-chul Park, said:

I read your policy statement and express thanks for it and the concern of the NCCCUSA for reunification and your support of the Korean people to that end.⁴¹¹

Kum-chol Chun, the Director of the United Front in North Korea, said, “The NCCCUSA was the first to adopt such a statement”.⁴¹² Representing the North Korean church, Ki-jun Ko expressed appreciation for the NCCCUSA’s policy statement during the second visit.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁷ For details, see, PCUSA, “Resolution on Reconciliation and Reunification in Korea”, in CCA and ICNDK ed., *Reunification, Peace and Justice in Korea: Christian Response in the 1980s*, Hong Kong, CCA, 1988, 40-49.

⁴⁰⁸ See, UCC, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea”, in *Ibid.*, 79-81; UMC, “Peace, Justice, and Reunification of Korea”, in *Ibid.*, 82-84; CCDC, “Resolution Concerning Peace and the Reunification of Korea”, in *Ibid.*, 85-86.

⁴⁰⁹ See the statements of these churches, *Ibid.*, 50-52, 75-78.

⁴¹⁰ NCCCUSA, “Report of the Official Delegation Visit to North and South Korea”, 19th June-3rd June 1987, 3.

⁴¹¹ NCCCUSA, “Confidential Report of the Official Delegation Visit to North and South Korea-Not to be Reproduced”, 19th June-3rd June 1987, 26.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 6. N.B., Even in 1997, when Rev. Young-sup Kang, the chairperson of KCF, visited the NCCCUSA, he said that the statement has been an historic document on peace and the reunification of Korea, “Young-sup Kang’s Speech”, manuscript, 17th March 1997, Church Center for the United Nations, New York.

The NCCCUSA Policy Statement brought a renewal of the US churches in approaching North Korea. Moreover, it challenged the old North Korean Communist understanding on Christianity, which saw Christianity as “a pro-American imperialistic religion”. For the North Korean Christians, it provided an opportunity to demonstrate a new image of the world churches to the Communists.

In conclusion, we have noted three “external renewals” which occurred in churches outside North Korea, and which concerned their relation to North Korean Christianity. These three were a renewal in the South Korean churches, in the WCC and in the NCCCUSA. These external renewals supported the renewal of northern Protestantism, which had been started already through internal stimuli and, in particular, through the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue.

4. “Social *Diakonia* Mission”: Seeking a Missiological Identity

4.1 “You Give Them Something to Eat”

Ever since 1993, there has been a food crisis across North Korea. However, it was difficult for North Korea to receive food assistance from the outside world at first because of its diplomatic isolation, and on account of the US economic embargo. The North Korean government was also ashamed of their food shortage situation, and did not want it to be known in the outside world. From 1995 onwards, more severe floods hit, and North Korea fell into famine. Finally, the government appealed for emergency assistance to the international community for survival. However, most western governments hesitated to support North Korea for political reasons, especially the nuclear and missile development projects of North Korea.

In this context, the northern Christians felt, “We must do something for the starving people because when people were hungry; Jesus said to his disciples ‘You give them something to eat’ (Mk 6,37).”⁴¹⁴ The KCF organized urban Christian volunteers to help in the work of restoring flooded rice fields.⁴¹⁵ However, it was difficult for the KCF to provide direct support for the starving people. “We tried to mobilize our resources for our people, but we did not

⁴¹⁴ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

have enough food even for ourselves.”⁴¹⁶ Therefore, the KCF appealed for an emergency humanitarian assistance to the international ecumenical community and the South Korean churches, “praying for the miracle of five loaves and two fishes.” On 26th December 1994, the Chairperson of the KCF appealed to the WCC for humanitarian assistance.⁴¹⁷ Then, when even more severe floods hit North Korea in 1995, he urgently reported to WCC that two thirds of North Korea had been severely affected by the worst torrential rain in fifty years, and again appealed for emergency relief.⁴¹⁸

Immediate action was initiated by the Asia Desk together with the Emergency Task Force of the WCC/LWF, later named Action by Churches Together (ACT). The ACT appeal went out to its constituencies throughout the world. The first target was to raise one million US Dollars for an emergency relief program to be put into operation through the KCF.⁴¹⁹ Within one month, about US\$ 800,000 had been contributed by the member churches of the WCC.⁴²⁰ From the first appeal, donations from the South Korean churches were remarkable, amounting to US\$ 250,000.⁴²¹

From the beginning, the KCF’s appeal was successful. The ACT delivered SFR 200,000 in medical supplies at the end of December 1995, and sent 1,000 tons of rice, worth US\$ 450,000.⁴²² The KCF contacted the Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) of the government to ensure proper distribution of the rice and medical supplies.⁴²³ The ACT delegation visited North Korea from 2nd-9th March 1996 to monitor the distribution and, in

⁴¹⁶ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴¹⁷ “From Young-sup Kang to Kyung-seo Park”, 26th December 1994. The WCC-Asia Desk sent USD 15,000 in this appeal. “From Kyung-seo Park to Young-sup Kang”, 25th January 1995.

⁴¹⁸ “From Young-sup Kang to Konrad Reiser”, 10th September 1995.

⁴¹⁹ “North Korea Floods Appeal-No.9541KP”, Emergency Task Force of WCC/LWF, 27th September 1995.

⁴²⁰ “Update No.2-North Korea Floods Appeal-No. 9541KP”, ACT, 13th March 1996, 1.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 3. It was not allowed to support the North Korean people until 1997 in South Korea. Therefore, the South Korean churches had been supporting North Korea through the international ecumenical organizations. Since 1997, due to the Sunshine Policy of President Kim Dae-jung, the direct support of the South Korean Christians has been encouraged. Concerning the Sunshine Policy, see, Ministry of Unification ed., *Hatbyut Jungchaek eui Euimi wa Chujinbanhyang*, (Meaning and Direction of the Sunshine Policy), Seoul, Ministry of Unification, 1998; Joo-seop Keum “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Church”, unpublished paper, Conference of the Board of World Mission, Church of Scotland, 19 June 2002, St Andrews. Especially, it is still not allowed to send cash from the South to the North. Therefore, often South Korean and the WCC used to send project funds via the China Christian Council. See, “From Si-chon Hwang to Kyung-seo Park”, 5th December 1996; “From Christine Ledger to Jin Guang Zhu”, 4th November 1997.

⁴²² “Update No.2-North Korea Floods Appeal-No. 9541KP”, ACT, 13th March 1996, 2.

⁴²³ “ACT Team Visits North Korea-Recommend More Aid”, 2nd-9th March 1996.

response to a new request from the KCF, suggested further support be given.⁴²⁴ Young-sup Kang remembers, “The immediate support and solidarity of WCC was not only much appreciated by the KCF, but was also a big surprise for our government.”⁴²⁵ The northern Christians began to believe, “Jesus will make another miracle of the five loaves and two fishes in North Korea”⁴²⁶ In this context, the KCF began to think about how it could develop social diaconal works, using the resources received from foreign Christians.⁴²⁷

This is the story of the beginning of the “Social *Diakonia* Mission,” as the KCF later named their activity on behalf of the starving people. The Social *Diakonia* Mission started after 1995, which means it is outside the period of this thesis. It is also difficult to offer an evaluative account this mission because it is still developing. The following attempt is based on the evidence of the early stage of the diaconal work in which we see the North Korean church beginning to reach out beyond itself to address the needs of the *minjung* as a whole. Up to this time the church had been mainly concerned with its own survival and revival. With the disaster of 1993 it involved itself deeply in the tragedy that the people were experiencing, reaching out to the wider community in a spirit of service, responding to Jesus’ imperative, “You give them something to eat.”

4.2 The Emergence of the “Social *Diakonia* Mission”

On 5th March 1996, the KCF received the first aid from ACT, 1,000 tons of rice at Nampo harbor.⁴²⁸ The KCF chose ten counties for the distribution of this rice. The beneficiaries were 578,500 families, who had lost most or all of their food stocks due to the 1995 floods.⁴²⁹ Here is the statistics of the distribution:

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴²⁵ Interview with Rev. Young-sup Kang, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴²⁶ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ Before this, the WCC had already supported the agricultural development project of the Wonsan Agricultural University from 1989-1993, the human resource development program of the Hamhung Industrial University from 1990-1993, and the Adult Education for Fishermen and Technicians in the fishing industry of the Wonsan Naval University from 1991-1994. However, this was the first social diaconal project organized through the KCF. Kyung-seo Park, “WCC Cooperation with North Korea”, unpublished report, 25th January 1996, 1-2.

⁴²⁹ “From Young-sup Kang to Kyung-seo Park”, 21st March 1996.

Table 12) Distribution of the First ACT Shipment⁴³⁰

Province	County	Date of Distribution	No. of Beneficiaries	Allocation Ration (t)	Actual A.R.(t)	No. of Supply Date
North Hwanghae	Unpa	March 8	52,000	100	99.65	3.4
	Rinsan	March 9	33,500	60	59.87	3.4
	Singhe	March 9	83,000	100	99.76	3.4
Jagang	Heichon	March 10	95,500	200	199.56	5.9
	Dongsin	March 10	5,200	50	49.95	5.9
	Kopung	March 11	3,300	30	29.87	5.9
North Pyungan	Sinuiju	March 9	115,000	250	249.39	3.3
	Pakchon	March 9	80,500	100	99.56	3.3
	Uiju	March 11	45,000	50	49.79	3.3
	Jongju	March 10	65,500	60	59.65	3.3
Total			578,500	1000	997.05	Average 3.8 days.

This table contains several significant facts, which connected directly to the future development of the northern Christian’s social diaconal projects. Firstly, attention would be paid to the counties in which the rice was distributed. Except for the three counties in Jagang province, which were experiencing the worst food shortage of all, the other seven counties were the historic centers of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. In particular, the four counties in the North Pyungan province had been famous for its foreign mission stations, and there were the areas with the highest percentage of Protestant Christians in North Korea before the partition of the Korean peninsula.⁴³¹ The Secretary for Mission of the KCF explained why counties were chosen as the main recipients of the food distribution in the following terms:

When we received the first food assistance from ACT, we did not have the national distribution network because it had been entirely the activity of government before this occasion. Therefore, we had to use the KCF county committees and house churches for the distribution work.⁴³²

According to Lee, from the beginning, the house churches were actively involved at the grassroots level in the food allocation for the local communities. It made both the Christians and the local people feel that the existence of house church was beneficial to their community. Evangelist Sung-sil Lee, Okryu House Church, remembers the voluntary work public distribution of the food as follows:

⁴³⁰ “Food Arrival and Distribution Form” in the letter, “From Young-sup Kang to Kyung-seo Park”, 21st March 1996.
⁴³¹ See, Chapter II, Section 1.
⁴³² Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, Secretary for Mission, KCF, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

I and the members of my church have worked day and night to help the allocation of the rice, which foreign Christian brothers sent for us. We were so happy because of this, and received many words of thanks from the people in our community. We are very proud of our Christian existence in our local community.⁴³³

The famine was a tragedy for North Korean people. However, for the Christians, it has been an opportunity to be close to the local community.

Lastly, in the process of distribution, the KCF and the house churches cooperated closely with the governmental organization, FDRC. The KCF discussed with the FDRC when choosing the beneficiaries and deciding the allocation rate, because the KCF did not have detailed statistics of the damages. The KCF was also involved with the Department of Transport in organizing transport for the distribution.⁴³⁴ Previously the KCF had only experienced cooperation with the United Front on the issue of reunification, expressed, for instance, in issuing a supportive statement for the reunification policy of the government and holding joint consultations. However, working together with the FDRC for the food aid, and its distribution, was a completely new experience of practical cooperation with the government. This experience was also a crucial factor leading to the government's later admission of the KCF to the status of a Non-Governmental Organization involved in social development.

In the early stages of the KCF's involvement in food shortage problem, another event took place that was important for the development of the Social *Diakonia* Mission. From 29th January to 2nd February 1996, the International Ecumenical Consultation on Solidarity for Peace in North East Asia was held in Macao, in cooperation with the WCC and the CCA.⁴³⁵ During the consultation, two important recommendations were made in relation to the KCF's diaconal activities. Churches were urged to continue their assistance through the existing ecumenical channel of the KCF, and the KCF was asked to continue providing information on the food situation and their activities.⁴³⁶ The KCF requested the Christian donors to send their assistance to them so that the North Korean Christians could continue their commitment to

⁴³³ Interview with Evangelist Sung-sil Lee, 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ Concerning the consultation, see, "The Report of International Ecumenical Consultation on Solidarity for Peace in North East Asia", 29th January-2nd February 1996, Macao.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

overcoming the famine.⁴³⁷ Of course, the western and South Korean donors welcomed this idea, and the international ecumenical community promised that they would continue their humanitarian aid to North Korea through the KCF. This decision meant that the KCF was able to acquire the material resources they needed to continue their social, diaconal activities among the starving people.

Some conservative church organizations such as *Hankuk Kidikyo Chongryunhaphoe* or All Christian Association in Korea, which do not believe the KCF is a genuine Christian organization, sent food through the Red Cross on to the advice of the South Korean government. However, since January 2002, the Association and other conservative churches, such as PCK-Hapdong, have changed their assistance channel to the KCF.⁴³⁸

The KCF, encouraged by the success of the first appeal and the decisions of the Macao consultation, made a second appeal to the ACT. From 12th-19th October 1996, the KCF invited the ACT delegation to discuss to set further involved in the 1997 appeal.⁴³⁹

After this visit, the General Secretary of the KCF, Rev. Chon-min Lee, reported on the results of the aid that had already been given and the WCC made a second appeal.⁴⁴⁰ The success of the first appeal encouraged the western churches to keep on supporting North Korea through the KCF.⁴⁴¹ The KCF handled all the processes involved in the foreign Christian donations

⁴³⁷ See, Young-sup Kang, "Task of Mission for Peace in North East Asia", Manuscript of Keynote Speech, International Ecumenical Consultation on Solidarity for Peace in North East Asia, 29th January, Macao.

⁴³⁸ Concerning the policy of humanitarian assistance of the conservative churches in South Korea, see, *Bukhan Dongpo Dopki Chunkuk Bogo Daehoi*, (The Report of the National Christian Conference to Support the North Korean People), 5th September 1997, Korean Ecumenical Building, Seoul.

⁴³⁹ See, H. Hensle, "Travel Report of North Korea", 12th-19th October 1996.

⁴⁴⁰ "From General Secretary of KCF to the World Council of Churches", 5th December 1996. The North Korean ambassador in Geneva also thanked and reported the food shortage situation to the general secretary of WCC, "From Chang-on Han to Konrad Reiser", 11th November 1996.

⁴⁴¹ For example, the Protestant Church in Saxony donated DM 30,000, and altogether DM 700,000 from came German churches. "*Landeskirche spendet 30,000 Mark für Hungernde in Nord-Korea*", *Der Sonntag*, 7th July 1996. In the letter "From Si-chon Hwang to Kyung-seo Park", 19th December 1996, the KCF reported the results of this contribution through the WCC. During his participation to the *Kirchentag* in 1997, Rev. Young-sup Kang visited the Saxon churches to express appreciation. See, "From Si-chon Hwang to Kyung-seo Park", 20th May 1997. The NCCJ also contributed two million Yen for the emergency relief work of the KCF. "From Kenichi Otsu to Kyung-seo Park", 9th May 1996.

from shipment to distribution.⁴⁴² The North Korean government clearly appreciated the KCF as an important channel for receiving foreign humanitarian aid.

Due to the request of the KCF, the ACT made its second appeal, requesting US\$ 2,146,133 for North Korea to the world churches on 17th December 1996.⁴⁴³ In 1998, ACT again made the third appeal to the amount of US\$ 4,500,000.⁴⁴⁴ According to the Asia Secretary of WCC, ACT supported altogether US\$ 25,000,000 of material assistance for North Korea, sent through the KCF, from 1996-2000.⁴⁴⁵

The South Korean churches also gave a great amount of humanitarian aid to North Korea. Here are statistics from which one can estimate the amount of such assistance:

Table 13) Statistics of Humanitarian Aid to North Korea⁴⁴⁶

Year Sector	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total (USD)
Government (S. Korea)	3,050,000	26,670,000	11,000,000	28,250,000	78,630,000	70,450,000	218,050,000
NGOs (S. Korea)	1,550,000	20,560,000	20,850,000	18,630,000	35,130,000	64,940,000	161,660,000
Total (S. Korea)	4,600,000	47,230,000	31,850,000	46,880,000	113,760,000	135,390,000	379,710,000
International Society	97,650,000	263,500,000	301,990,000	359,880,000	181,770,000	258,490,000	1,463,280,000

In the total amount of South Korean support, the contribution of NGOs was 43%. According to the report of the Ministry of Unification, most South Korean NGOs’ contributions have

⁴⁴² For example, see, the letter “From Min-u Hwang to Patricia Patterson”, 11th October 1999, which arranged the US Christian women’s support.

⁴⁴³ See, “Appeal-Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Material Aid Assistance for Flood Damage in 1997”, ASKP61, ACT, 17th December 1996; “Update No.1, North Korea ASKP61”, 20th March 1997; “Update No.2, North Korea ASKP61”, 10th April 1997; “Update No.3, North Korea ASKP61”, 29th May 1997; “Update No.4, Report on ACT Team visit to North Korea”, 27th May-3rd June 1997.

⁴⁴⁴ See, “North Korea Crisis-ASKP81”, ACT, 28th January 1998; H. Hensle, “North Korea: The Assistance is Taking Effect”, The Report of ACT Team Visit, 18th-25th April 1998.

⁴⁴⁵ Kyung-seo Park, “The Assistance of World Churches for North Korea”, Unpublished Report, 10th February 2000, 1.

⁴⁴⁶ The statistics are from, Humanitarian Assistance Bureau, “2001Nyun Indojuk Deabuk Jiwon Hyunhwang”, (The Report of Humanitarian Aid to North Korea in 2001), Ministry of Unification, 17th January 2002.

been made by the churches and church related organizations.⁴⁴⁷ For example, in 2001, 90% of all the NGOs' support was the Christian contribution.⁴⁴⁸ The South Korean Christian assistance has mostly been sent through the KCF due to the Macao agreement.

Due to the increase of the assistance through the KCF, in 1998, the KCF considered strengthening its social diaconal structure. The food situation was also slowly getting better after the harvest in 1998. Therefore, the KCF began to evaluate their activities for the last two years, and to discuss new directions. Choon-ku Lee, Secretary for Mission of KCF, said:

In autumn of 1998, the food situation was slowly getting better. Therefore, we had a chance to evaluate our activity since the beginning of the food crisis. The Central Committee of the KCF agreed that a more sustainable and systematic approach to our diaconal activities needed to be developed. The committee gave a mandate to the Department of Mission to develop longer term projects in addition to emergency relief. We agreed to call this new approach the Social *Diakonia* Mission of KCF.⁴⁴⁹

The KCF now began to develop longer-term projects in the name of Social *Diakonia* Mission. When the delegation of South Korean churches visited the KCF from 22nd-29th September 1998, it suggested giving financial support for the construction of church buildings. However, the KCF asked for support for their longer-term projects because "it is possible to construct church buildings after saving the starving people."⁴⁵⁰ The KCF therefore asked the South Korean churches to support the construction of bread and noodle factories for the hungry children.⁴⁵¹ However, the South Korean churches were not able to do this because the South Korean government did not allow it,⁴⁵² warning that that the bread and noodles from the factory would be used for military purposes. The primary concern of the South Korean churches was still church reconstruction. However, by contrast, Insik Kim, the Secretary for East Asia and Pacific of the PCUSA,⁴⁵³ understood the importance of this idea in the North Korean context, and agreed to support the original project for producing noodles and bread.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Rev. Choon-ku Lee, 3rd April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴⁵⁰ "Hankuk Kyohoe Daepyodan Bangbuk Kyulkwa Bogo", (The Report of the Delegation of South Korean Churches to North Korea), 22nd-29th September 1998, 2.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² "From Young-ju Kim to Young-sup Kang", 26th October 1998.

⁴⁵³ He visited North Korea more than twenty times and his mother and sisters still live in there.

Interview with Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, 13th December 2000, Fukuoka, Japan.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* In fact, this project had been discussed by Si-chon Hwang, Secretary for International Relations of the KCF, Victor Hsu, East Asia Secretary of the NCCCUSA and Insik Kim since from as far back as 1997. See, "From Si-chun Hwang to Victor Hsu", 2nd December 1997; concerning the

The KCF felt that it was necessary to explain the background of the Social *Diakonia* Mission to the southern churches. The Chairperson of the KCF gave an account of the launching of the Social *Diakonia* Mission and explained its necessity at the Sixth Christian Conference on Peace, Reunification and Mission of the Fatherland in Osaka.⁴⁵⁵ Kang did not define what exactly the Social *Diakonia* Mission means. Rather he emphasized what the northern Christians discovered through their diaconal activities. He said, “The activity was sharing love, the love that God has given us through our foreign and southern brothers. Through the activity, the image and status of Christianity has been upgraded in our society. Therefore, we would like to begin more sustainable projects to strengthen the KCF as a church for others.”⁴⁵⁶ During the conference, the PCK agreed to support another long-term project of the PCK for agricultural development, the green house project to provide vegetables for kindergartens.⁴⁵⁷

The KCF also decided to develop the provincial and county committees, which had originally functioned like presbyteries and later developed into public food distribution centers, as local social diaconal centers for the wider community. The KCF therefore decided to strengthen the human resources of the local committees and build local diaconal centers. In 1997, there had already been an increase of about 230 staff, recruited from the house churches into the KCF provincial and county committees for the work of food distribution.⁴⁵⁸ Now, the KCF intended to develop these staff personnel as the enablers of the local social diaconal projects. The first social diaconal center building is presently being constructed with the financial support of the PCK.

factory, see, “Proposal on Requesting Cooperation with the Establishment of Instant Noodle Factory”, The Central Committee of the KCF, 7th January 1999.

⁴⁵⁵ See, Young-sup Kang, “Keynote Speech”, manuscript, Sixth Christian Conference on Peace, Reunification and Mission of Fatherland in Osaka, 8th October 1998.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁴⁵⁷ For details, see, “Agricultural Life-Saving Project for the North Korean People”, PCK’s Report to CWM, January 1999.

⁴⁵⁸ “From the Central Committee of Korean Christian Federation to the Asia Desk of World Council of Churches”, June 1997.

4.3 Relevance and Challenges

The Social *Diakonia* Mission has emerged from the experience of the KCF's involvement in food assistance as the defining feature of its active engagement in mission. Yet, there has not been a single research paper on it. There is need for more developed missiological understanding of what the Social *Diakonia* Mission of the KCF's, and of what it intends to achieve.

Diakonia is an essential missiological nature of Christ's church. Serving the poor is a relevant mission method in a Communist society where evangelism is restricted. While leaders of the northern Christians defended Christianity by presenting it as a religion for the suffering people, quoting the *minjung* theology and liberation theology in the Christian-Jucheon dialogue, it was the grassroot Christians that demonstrated what this theory means in practice by developing the Social *Diakonia* Mission. While the dialogue brought a change in the intellectuals' understanding of Christianity, the Social *Diakonia* Mission is bringing a similar change among the *minjung*. One evidence of this change is the increase in the number of Christians in North Korea.⁴⁵⁹ For instance, the membership of Bongsu Church has increased from about 300 in 1995 to about 450 in 2000. According to Rev. Sung-bok Chang, the pastor of Bongsu Church, most new believers were people who had received the food distribution from the church.⁴⁶⁰

E. Weingartner, who attended that church, is highly critical of this increase because, he claims, it produces "rice Christians". He has doubts about their motivation for joining the church.⁴⁶¹ *Diakonia* is not merely an evangelistic tactic, but is the nature of church. Therefore, the missiological understanding of Social *Diakonia* Mission is necessary to be clarified within the KCF.

A more serious problem in the development of the Social *Diakonia* Mission is self-support. The principle of self-support has been a strong tradition in Korean Christianity. It was particularly strong in northern Christianity before the liberation.⁴⁶² Even after 1972, the northern Christians reopened the house churches and theological seminary by themselves.

⁴⁵⁹ See, the statistics in Chapter VI, Section 2.2.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview with Rev. Sung-bok Chang, pastor of Bongsu Church, 6th April 2001, Pyongyang.

⁴⁶¹ Interview with E. Weingartner, 12th April 2001, North Bay, Canada.

⁴⁶² See, Chapter I, Section 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.

However, although the situation is understandable, the social diaconal activity of the KCF has largely depended, since 1996, on the South Korean and foreign financial and material contributions. This could result in the northern churches becoming completely dependent financially on the southern churches. Such economic dependency could cause theological and ecclesiastical dependency as well. Therefore, it is urgent to develop self-support projects together with the Social *Diakonia* Mission.

Another problem is the delay of theological development. Although the food supply is now getting better, it seems that the KCF is losing interest in the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue. When the WARC suggested reopening the dialogue, the response of the KCF was dubious and evasive.⁴⁶³ “Now, most concerns of the KCF are concentrated on projects to upgrade the social position of Christians and to increase their number, maybe.”⁴⁶⁴ If the Social *Diakonia* Mission is developed from a project-oriented perspective without proper theological examination, its missiological significance threatens to be diminished.

Lastly, the training of the staff in the local committees as enablers of the Social *Diakonia* Mission is an important issue for future development. According to Choon-ku Lee, some of workers have already begun to study at the Pyongyang Theological Seminary. However, the seminary is only offering ministry training courses at the moment, with nothing specifically on the topic of Christian mission.⁴⁶⁵ Therefore, it is necessary for the KCF to train trainers for the Social *Diakonia* Mission workers. Such training must include increasing the ability for theological reflection on social mission.⁴⁶⁶

Despite these problems, and the future tasks, the significance of the emergence of the Social *Diakonia* Mission in North Korean Christianity should not be underestimated. The North Korean Christians have begun seeking their missiological identity through developing the Social *Diakonia* Mission among the suffering *minjung*.

⁴⁶³ Interview with Rev. Dr. Seong-won Park, Executive Secretary for Witness and Cooperation, WARC, 17th January 2001, Geneva.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ Concerning the curriculum of the seminary, see, Chapter VI, Section 3.

⁴⁶⁶ The KCF agreed with the WCC to send students to the Bossey Ecumenical Institute for training, but this has not been realized yet. Interview with Prof. Kyung-seo Park, 28th November, 2000, Seoul.

In this chapter, we have examined the internal renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea since 1988. The institutionally revived North Korean church first sought its theological identity through the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue in the context of political changes, and then diaconal identity through the Social *Diakonia* Mission in the context of famine. While the revival was an institutional, quantitative, and external development of the northern churches, the evidence shows that the renewal led to a theological, qualitative, and internal development of northern Protestantism. The *minjung*-centered approach of both the dialogue and *diakonia* has been successful, in spite of several challenges and deficiencies that still exist. The dialogue brought a positive change in the *Juche*an understanding of Christianity, and the *diakonia* brought a similar change among the northern *minjung*. Moreover, through the development of diaconal mission, northern Christianity developed as a missionary church.

In addition to the renewal of the northern churches, the renewal of the South Korean and international ecumenical relations with North Korea also contributed to the development of North Korean Protestant Christianity. The relationship between the church (KCF)-axis and community (house churches)-axis has cooperated well with the state-axis to overcome the national crisis since the beginning of the famine. Among various deficiencies that we noted, however, the most important is probably the need for northern Christianity to develop its theological positions and increase its capacity for proper theological reflection. Such reflection should be specially focused the particular demands of Christian mission in the North Korean context.

Chapter VIII

A Summary and Assessment of Church-State Relations in North Korea

The premise of this research has been that church-state relations have decisively influenced Protestant Christianity's success and failure in North Korea. Our thesis has examined the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with particular reference to the development of the historical paradigms of church-state relations in North Korea. In so doing, it has identified that diverse paradigms of church-state relationships have developed, and each paradigm crucially affected the fate of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. Furthermore, we have also found that together with the church-axis and the state-axis, the *minjung*-axis has been a highly important factor in the dynamics of church-state relations in North Korean Christianity.

In this final chapter, an attempt will be made to summarize the historical paradigms of church-state relations in North Korea, and to assess critically the contribution of each paradigm towards the development of Protestant Christianity in North Korea.

1. Historical Paradigms and Assessments

1.1 The *Minjung*-Centered Oppositional Paradigm

Protestant Christianity was introduced to the Korean peninsula through the 'northern route.' It arrived in a northern Korean society that suffered from economic, social and political discrimination, in relation to Southern Korea, at the end of the Chosun Dynasty. Against the traditional caste system of the south-centered Confucianism, northern Protestantism engaged in the enlightenment of social equality among the northern *minjung*. Northern Protestantism developed the idea of social reformation, which emphasized a republican polity, emphasizing the role of the people against that of the monarch. Translation of the Bible into *Hangul*, the language of *minjung*, gave the *minjung* a new vision of the Kingdom of God, where every human being is equal.

When Korea was colonized by Japan, the exploitation by the Japanese colonial government concentrated on Northern Korea because of its mining industry, and in order to prepare the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Under these conditions, Protestant Christianity in Northern

Korea developed as an important focus of the independence movement, in particular through leading the March First Independence Movement. Korean nationalism thus became an important characteristic of northern Protestantism. When the Japanese imposed *Shinto* shrine worship to suppress the rise of Christian nationalism, the northern Christians strongly resisted, on the grounds that it was an issue of *status confessionis*. By leading the independence movement, northern Protestantism was recognized as a patriotic religion by the northern *minjung*.

In summary, therefore, the church-state relationship in Northern Korea before independence modeled a paradigm of Christian opposition to the state, aimed against both the south-centered Chosun Dynasty and Japanese colonial rule. In the development of this oppositional paradigm, the notion of being the church of the *minjung* was important in Northern Korean Christian self-identity. Northern Protestantism understood both the Chosun monarchy and the Japanese colonial state as tyrannies that oppressed the *minjung*. Therefore, resistance against the state was justified on the grounds of the liberation of the *minjung*. Protestant Christianity in Northern Korea was highly respected by the *minjung* as a patriotic and, indeed, a *minjung* religion.

On the evidence that has been presented and examined in Chapter I and II of this thesis, it can be concluded that this oppositional paradigm of church-state relations was a major cause of Protestant Christianity's original success in Northern Korea.

1.2 The Competitive Oppositional Paradigm

During Japanese rule, both Protestant Christianity and the Communist movement, especially Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese guerillas, were centers of the independence struggle in Northern Korea. With liberation, a new phase began. Northern Protestantism and Communism now encountered each other as ideological rivals in the task of nation building. The Christian attempt to take political hegemony through organizing the first modern political party in Korean history was offset by Kim Il-sung and his followers, who established a Communist regime with the support of the Soviet Army. Kim Il-sung invited the Christians to cooperate in national construction through joining a united front. However, the FPJP rejected this option, and fell back on the oppositional paradigm of church and state that had prevailed during Japanese rule. The northern Christians argued that Christianity could not co-exist with

atheistic Communism. Therefore, the Christians competed for political power through organizing Christian parties and clashed with the Communists over several political issues, and most notably that of the boycott of the general election.

In this process of political competition and conflict with the Communists, the northern Protestant Christians lost the support of the *minjung*. One of the main reasons behind the competition and conflict was the issue of land reform. The northern Christians rejected the Communist land reform in order to maintain their recently upgraded social status, in which they had risen out of the *minjung* to become part of the elite. As a consequence, the northern *minjung* welcomed the Communist policy of social reform, but did not favor of the northern Christians' attempt to gain political power. Because of the Communist suppression and the disapproval of the *minjung*, the political initiatives of the FPJP finally collapsed. With the outbreak of the Korean War, the majority of northern Protestant Christians evacuated to the South to avoid the discrimination and persecution they expected to experience under Communist rule.

The above oppositional paradigm between the church and the Communist state succeeded the traditional paradigm of opposition between church and state before liberation. However, the position of the church altered after liberation, by the fact that it lost the support of the *minjung*-axis. From this we can conclude that in the development of an opposition paradigm against state, the support of the *minjung* is a crucial factor. Without it, Christianity could not succeed in North Korea.

1.3 The Diplomatic Cooperative Paradigm

With the establishment of the North Korean state in 1945, a cooperative paradigm developed between the leaders of the NKCA and the new Communist government emerged. The NKCA recognized that the Communist social reform was necessary in North Korea. Therefore, they supported the Kim Il-sung regime, and participated in the United Front of North Korea. The NKCA and the Communist regime thus developed a cooperative paradigm of church-state relations.

Although this Christian group was a minority within the northern churches, it held ecclesiastical power with and through Communist support. The NKCA leaders introduced a

radical renewal program to root northern Protestantism in the Communist soil. However, this process of renewal was largely dependent on the support they received from the Communist state, and was carried out through a top-down method. The theological justification or basis for this approach was very weak, and in any case deficient. When the Korean War broke out, the NKCA leaders continued their cooperative paradigm by supporting the Communist cause against the UN "Police Action," which carried the support of the WCC and western churches. However, their cooperation resulted in failure because the majority of northern Christians, including many leaders of NKCA, fled to the South during the war.

Thus, just as the FPJP's opposition to the Communist government lost the support of the northern *minjung*, so too the cooperation paradigm of the NKCA failed to find support among the grassroots Christians in North Korea. Although the NKCA supported the land reform, and declared its intention to work for the *minjung*, most of its activities were actually concentrated on securing ecclesiastical power through a bureaucratic approach to the Communist state. While the FPJP aimed at obtaining the secular political power through competing with the Communists, the NKCA aimed at the same thing through diplomatic cooperation with the Communist leaders. Both eventually failed.

The original intention of the NKCA was to renew the church-state relationship through rooting northern Protestantism in the Communist soil. Although the NKCA aimed to be a church for the *minjung* in theory, in practice, its activity was focused on diplomatic cooperation with the Communists. The NKCA failed to achieve an authentic renewal of the northern churches because it attempted to achieve the renewal simply through bureaucratic changes.

Although by 1949 the NKCA had become the only representative Protestant organization in North Korea, it paid the price for its uncritical cooperation with the government. The NKCA became a sort of religious spokesman for the Kim Il-sung regime. The diplomatic cooperative paradigm of the NKCA resulted in a dependency of the church-axis on the state-axis at the expense of the *minjung*-axis. Its uncritical cooperation with the secular state also brought about an identity crisis in the NKCA in regard to public issues.

1.4 The Paradigm of Catacomb

After the Korean War, only one fourth of Protestant Christians and a few NKCA pastors remained in North Korea. However, they were not able to reconstruct their churches because of the social antipathy toward the Christians, the great majority of whom had supported the enemy during the war. In this context, the remnant Christians (who were not part of the NKCA) again collectively boycotted the general election, as an action aimed against the Kim Il-sung regime. This boycott brought about a severe “Anti-Religious Campaign” by the Communists. The Communist state legalized a policy of social discrimination against the Christians. Anti-Communist underground Christian leaders were executed, and anti-Christian propaganda and slogans were displayed across North Korea. Because of the NKCA’s concentration on a bureaucratic approach, it was not able to provide a theological justification for the continued existence of Christianity in North Korean Communist society.

Consequently, the remnant Christians were in difficulty to openly enjoy religious life after 1958. They gathered in underground house groups for secret and simple worship from 1958-1972. The state-axis absolutely overwhelmed the church-axis, and did not allow any religious freedom. This paradigm of church-state relations was similar to the paradigm of the Catacombs in Rome during the Neronian persecution.

The discrimination and persecution practiced against Christians in North Korea from 1958-1972 points to the failure of the former church-state relationships, developed by the NKCA and the FPJP. Both the competitive oppositional paradigm of the FPJP and the diplomatic cooperative paradigm of the NKCA had ignored the axis of the *minjung*. Therefore, when the Communist state introduced its hostile ideological attack on northern Protestantism, the remnant Christians were neither able to justify their Christian existence in the North Korean Communist society, nor able to receive any support and sympathy from the *minjung*. This taught northern Protestantism an important lesson: a diplomatic rapprochement with the state was clearly not enough to secure the survival of the church; rather it had to be a church “with” and “for” the *minjung*. Furthermore, it would have to articulate a theological understanding of the significance of Christian churches in a Communist society.

In spite of the terrible climate created by the Anti-Religious Campaign, the remnant Christians kept their faith by existing underground. This experience trained the remnant

Christians so that they could keep the seed of faith, withstanding the most severe and trying conditions.

1.5 The *Minjung*-Centered Cooperative Paradigm

From 1972 onwards, the political situation in North Korea changed, with the Communists becoming tolerant towards the remnant Christians because they no longer regarded the Christians as a political threat. Moreover, for the Communists it was necessary to use the Christians for propaganda purposes, demonstrating to the outside world that religious freedom existed in North Korea, during the political competition with South Korea. Therefore, the state was willing to permit limited religious freedom for the remnant Christians to enjoy free worship through the rewriting of the article on religion in the constitution. But this did not allow for public evangelism and religious education.

However, the subjective efforts of the remnant Christians for promoting a revival of Christianity were more important than constitutional change. They gathered together and re-established the KCF as their national ecclesiastical organization in 1972, and reopened house churches. The revived KCF established the Platform for cooperation with the state, developing leadership institutions for the churches, providing a new translation of the Bible and hymnbook, instituting a system of registration, and engaging in North and South dialogue with the assistance of the WCC, for the external development of the revival. The institutional efforts of the KCF as the vehicle for the revival of post-1972 Christianity in North Korea proved successful. However, this revival was concentrated on quantitative rather than qualitative growth.

When the revival was stabilized, northern Protestantism began to search for internal qualitative renewal. The institutionally-revived northern churches sought to express their theological identity through the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue. One of the distinctive results of this dialogue was an increase of mutual understanding between the Christians and the *Jucheans*. The northern Christians accepted that the *Juche* Idea is not merely an expressing atheistic materialism, for it emphasizes that spiritual consciousness in what determines the course of history. On the other hand, the *Jucheans* also recognized that Christianity is not simply the opium of the people. Moreover, both found that there is a similarity between northern Protestantism and North Korean Communism in that both have developed a *minjung*

and a *minjok*-centered approach. This enabled the northern Christians to justify their presence in North Korean Communist society theologically (notwithstanding the fact that this theological work still needs to be deepened), while at the same time the *Jucheans* and the new leadership of North Korea gradually moved towards a more positive reinterpretation of Christianity.

While the former cooperation paradigm practiced by the NKCA and the KWP had merely been a diplomatic one, the new revived cooperative paradigm was based on mutual understanding through theological and ethical dialogue. The point of convergence between the two different systems of thought was the similarity of their understanding of the *minjung* as the subject of history. This similarity has served as a theological justification of the KCF's cooperation with the Communist state. Consequently, the article of "anti-religious propaganda," which had been the legal foundation of the Communists' discrimination towards the Christians, was deleted from the constitution in 1992.

While the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue motivated the *minjung*-centered theological renewal of northern Protestantism, the development of Social *Diakonia* Mission was the practical renewal of its *minjung*-centered mission. North Korean people have been suffering from famine since 1993. In this context, the northern churches became committed to relief works for the suffering people with the material support of the South Korean and world churches, and through this experience the northern churches developed their diaconal identity. Although it is too early to evaluate the Social *Diakonia* Mission, there can be no doubt that it has proven itself as one of the chief characteristics of the revival of northern Protestantism.

The dialogue and *diakonia* brought about a positive change in the North Korean understanding of Christianity. In this meaningful renewal, the *minjung*-centered cooperative approach emerged as a new paradigm of church-state relations in North Korea. Northern Protestantism introduced the *minjung* as the dynamic element in a revived understanding of church-state relations.

Through the above summary and assessment, we can conclude that northern Protestantism has developed diverse historical paradigms of church-state relations, and that each paradigm decisively influenced the fate of the northern Protestant churches. The issue has not been merely a legal and institutional debate on specific issues like religious education, religious tax,

state church or free church etc. Rather, has been a response to the whole modern history of North Korea, with its major themes of colonization, national construction, war, famine etc.

2. The *Minjung*-Centered Approach in Church-State Relations

Protestant Christianity in North Korea has experimented with a wide range of historical paradigms of church-state relations, from opposition to cooperation, and each paradigm influenced Protestant Christianity's success or failure in North Korea in different ways. In this experience of success and failure, the notion of a *minjung*-centered approach was a key issue, which decided the appropriateness of each paradigm.

Through our examination of the various historical paradigms, we have identified that the concept of the *minjung* has to be included in the bilateral relationship between church and state for establishing a proper relationship. The Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State had already argued in 1937 that the "community of people" remains an essential criterion for proper relations between church and state. In the North Korean context, this means that the notion of the *minjung* has to be the criterion for determining whether the northern church should oppose the state or cooperate with it. If the state developed policies in favor of the *minjung*, and the *minjung* support their government, the church can cooperate with the state. However, if a government is tyrannical and oppresses the *minjung*, the church cannot allow the legitimacy of the government, and must oppose the state. Therefore, the triangular approach of church, *minjung* and state is a highly relevant analytical methodology for the northern churches in critically assessing their church-state relations.

No single answer can be given to the theoretical question of what the best relationship between the church and the state in North Korea would be, because the socio-political context has always been changing. It all depends on the nature of the changes taking place. The northern churches have experimented with diverse relationships between church and state, offering different responses to different changes occurring in the context. Sometimes their response has been appropriate and authentic, at other time not.

Church-state relations are not simply a matter of defining the differences between the two entities in such a way that each can fulfil its task without interference from the other.⁴⁶⁷ Rather, it is possible for the church to accompany and assist the state in the spirit of critical solidarity, in order to embrace the welfare of God's creation. In this respect, the current cooperation of the northern churches with the state is meaningful because there is remarkable solidarity between the church and the state in serving the suffering *minjung*.

However, on the other hand, there are also increasing criticisms of the North Korean totalitarian state both inside and outside North Korea. As well as the increase in the number of economic refugees since the famine, political refugees too are dramatically increasing. Here, although the current *minjung*-centered cooperation paradigm has been successful since 1972 for promoting the revival and renewal of northern Protestantism, the changes now happening, which may be called the signs of the times, need to be read and interpreted carefully when developing the paradigm of cooperation with the state. If the northern Christians simply support their Communist state without critical assessment, when the political situation is suddenly changed, for instance in the case of the Kim Jong-il regime collapsing, they might lose the support of the *minjung* again. Therefore it is necessary to recognize that the current cooperation paradigm is not a permanent one. It is not necessary to be content with the current position because the context of the state and *minjung* is always changing, which is why a renewed critical theological assessment of the situation is always required.

There is a principle of ongoing reformation in the Reformed tradition. The northern church, which has generally preserved Korean Reformed tradition, must be reminded that *ecclesia reformanta semper reformanda est*.⁴⁶⁸ The church that is reformed is always in need of being reformed. The origins of this famous slogan are obscure. It does not come from Calvin but a later period.⁴⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it is an appropriate slogan for use among the anonymous grassroots participants, the *minjung* in Korean conception, in the struggle for ongoing reformation. As church-state relations in North Korea have been developed in diverse paradigms due to changes in the socio-historical context, the current paradigm of church-state relations cannot be regarded as permanent. The only permanent feature is that the church must

⁴⁶⁷ L. Vischer ed., *Church and State: Opening a New Ecumenical Discussion*, 10.

⁴⁶⁸ Concerning the study on *semper reformanda*, see the thorough study of Hungarian-Swiss scholar G. Barczay, *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, Zürich, EVZ-Verlag, 1961.

⁴⁶⁹ I. J. Hesselink, *On Being Reformed*, New York, Reformed Church Press, 1988, 119.

always identify itself with the suffering *minjung* for the ceaseless reformation of itself, and must continually evaluate and reshape its relationship with the state accordingly.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to give a comprehensive account of the development of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, with special reference to issues of church and state. It has been argued that the issue of the church-state relationship decisively influenced the growth of churches in North Korea. Five diverse paradigms of church-state relations have developed in the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, and each paradigm brought different results for the fate of northern Protestantism.

The research has demonstrated that whatever paradigm is developed, whether one of opposition, criticism or cooperation, church-state relations, the *minjung*-centered approach is a key factor. This approach needs to be considered in assessing the proper relationship to be constructed between church and state at any point in the ongoing history of the North Korean context. In this respect, the *minjung*-centered cooperation paradigm of church-state relationship of the revived Protestant Christianity in North Korea since 1972 has not been a compromise accommodation with the communist government, but rather an effective articulation of church-state relations for the benefit of the suffering northern *minjung*, through the renewal of its theological and diaconal identities.

In examining the history of Protestant Christianity in North Korea, this thesis hopes to have made an original contribution to the study of Christianity in North Korea, as the first academic thesis on the subject. This thesis has consulted primary sources relevant to the whole history of northern Protestantism, focusing on its development after the Korean War and its revival since 1972. It has also raised missiological awareness of the importance of the KCF and the house churches. It has attempted to contribute to the development of Korean theology through its arguments on the issues of church-state relations, and the Christian dialogue with the *Juche* Idea.

The possible contributions of this research are not only academic, but also practical. It hopes to contribute towards building up a “common ground” for mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation between the South and North Korean churches.

If this thesis succeeds in proving that the revival and renewal of northern Protestantism was not a compromise accommodation with the communist government, but an effective articulation of *minjung*-centered Christianity within a communist context, it does not claim to be a final work; rather it hopes to stimulate further academic interest in studies of Christianity in North Korea. It must be recognized in this conclusion that there are several areas in which research on Christianity in North Korea needs to be taken further. Four areas merit brief elaboration.

The first recognizes that the study of Christian-*Juche*an dialogue must be fully developed as an independent research project by theologians. One of the teachings of history through the research of this thesis is that when northern Protestantism carried on its renewal in the communist context without proper theological work, it failed to justify the significance of Christian existence in North Korea to the communist society. This led the grassroots Christians being unable to participate fruitfully in that society. Therefore, the Christian-*Juche*an dialogue needs to be continued and deepened, with active research on the topic.

A second area of research arises in regards to the history of local Christian communities, with special interest in the house churches. The house churches are the main centers of the religious life of northern Christians, and have directly interacted with local communist societies. The experiences of Christians within these churches provide highly important empirical and historical data for the development of North Korean theology. However, unfortunately, the author's fieldwork for two weeks in North Korea was too limited to collect primary sources in relation to this topic. A systematic effort to collect this data through oral sources, from the people themselves, is now urgently needed.

A third area for further studies that has to be examined is the history of Roman Catholicism in North Korea. When the communist regime was established, northern Catholicism shut the doors of its cathedrals because it was not able to be in contact with the Vatican. However, surprisingly, the Jangchoong Cathedral in Pyongyang has reopened, and the *Chosun Cheonjukyo Hyuphoi* or North Korean Catholic Christian Association was formed in 1988. This association reports that there are about eight hundred Roman Catholic Christians in North Korea. This suggests that there must have been some continuation of Roman Catholic religious life during the decades in which the Roman Catholic church was officially absent from North Korea. Therefore, it is important to examine the history of Roman Catholicism in

North Korea, in order to give a fuller account of the diverse Christian traditions in North Korea.

The fourth area for further research would be comparative studies with the historical experiences of other religions in North Korea. North Korea, like South Korea, is a multi-religious society. It is easy to generalize that other religions faced a similar fate to that of Protestant Christianity, because the Communists opposed all religions. However, on the contrary, for instance, *Chundokyo* (天道教), the current name of *Tonghak*, has a larger membership in North Korea than it has in South Korea. The *Chundoists* have also had their political party since the end of 1940s. How *Chundokyo* has grown into a major religion in North Korea, and why the Communists have allowed it and have been tolerant to its political activities, are questions that merit careful research. Are there any co-relationships, common experiences and mutual understanding between the nationalism of *Chundokyo* and the *Juche* Idea? This kind of comparative research would be highly valuable not only out of academic interest, but also for providing practical references for the future development of the Christian mission in North Korean society.

Finally, it is predictable that the dramatic increase in the number of Christians in North Korea will be continued, due to northern Protestantism's effective engagement with its communist context. So far, the *minjung*-centered cooperation paradigm of church-state relationships has successfully led to the revival and renewal of Protestant Christianity in North Korea. However, it is also necessary for the northern Christians to be reminded that this paradigm is not a permanent one, because a rapid political change in the state-axis, towards a new opening towards the outside world, seems to be developing.

The future ecclesiological development of Protestant Christianity in North Korea will also be of interest. Will it strengthen the house church-centered congregational model, or follow the hierarchical model of southern Protestantism? Will it be possible for the KCF and the house churches to continue developing an independent tradition, as the China Christian Council has done? Or will it be absorbed as part of the southern tradition, as has happened to the former eastern German church? Or will it return to the traditional model of church if the model articulated in the socialist context collapses, or is no longer necessary, as likewise seem to have happened to the eastern European churches as a whole after the collapse of communism?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

KOREAN PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Dated the 4252nd Year of the Kingdom of Korea, 3rd Month, 1st Day (March 1, 1919)

We herewith proclaim the independence of Korea and the liberty of the Korean people. We tell it to the world in witness of the equality of all nations, and we pass it on to our posterity as their inherent right.

We make this proclamation, having in back of us a history of forty-three centuries and 20,000,000 united, loyal people. We take this step to insure to our children for all time to come, life and liberty in accord with the awakening conscience of this new era. This is the clear leading of God, the moving principle of the present age, the just claim of the whole human race.

It is something that cannot be stamped out, or stifled, or gagged, or suppressed by any means. Victims of an older age, when brute force and the spirit of plunder ruled, we have come after these long thousands of years to experience the agony of ten years of foreign oppression, with every loss of the right to live, every restriction of the freedom of thought, every damage to the dignity of life, every opportunity lost for a share in the intelligent advance of the age in which we live.

Assuredly, if the defects of the past are to be rectified, if the wrongs of the present are to be righted, if future oppression is to be avoided, if thought is to be set free, if right of action is to be given a place, if we are to attain to any way of progress, if we are to deliver our children from the painful heritage of shame, if we are to leave blessing and happiness intact for those who succeed us, the first of all necessary things is the complete independence of our people. What cannot our twenty millions do, with hearts consecrated to liberty, in this day when human nature and conscience are making a stand for truth and right? What barrier can we not break, what purpose can we not accomplish?

We have no desire to accuse Japan of breaking many solemn treaties since 1876, nor to single out specially the teachers in the schools or the government officials who treat the heritage of our ancestors as a colony of their own, and our people and our civilization as a nation of savages, and who delight only in beating us down and bringing us under their heel.

We have no wish to find special fault with Japan's lack of fairness or her contempt for our civilization and the principles on which her state rests; we, who have greater cause to reprimand ourselves, need not spend time in finding fault with others; neither need we, who require so urgently to build for the future, spend useless hours over what is past and gone. Our urgent need today is the rebuilding of this house of ours and not the

discussion of who has broken it down or what has caused its ruin. Our work is to clear the future of defects in accord with the earnest dictates of conscience. Let us not be filled with bitterness or resentment over past occasions for anger.

Our part is to influence the Japanese government, dominated as it is by the old idea of brute force which thinks to run counter to reason and universal law, so that it will change and act honestly and in accord with the principles of right and truth.

The result of annexation, brought about against the will of the Korean people, is that the Japanese are concerned only for their own gain, and by a false set of figures show a profit and loss account between us two peoples most untrue, digging a trench of everlasting deeper and deeper the farther they go.

Ought not the way of enlightened courage to be to correct the evils of the past by ways that are sincere, and by true sympathy and friendly feelings make a new world in which the two peoples will be equally blessed?

To bind by force twenty millions of resentful Koreans will mean not only loss of peace forever for this part of the Far East, but also will increase the ever-growing suspicions of four hundred millions of Chinese upon whom depends the safety of the Far East--besides strengthening the hatred of Japan. From this all the rest of the East will suffer. Today Korean independence will mean not only life and happiness for us, but also Japan's departure from an evil path and her exaltation to the place of true protector of the East, so that China too would put all fear of Japan aside. This thought comes from no minor resentment, but from a large hope for the welfare and blessings of mankind.

A new era wakes before our eyes, the old world of force is gone, and the new world of righteousness and truth is here. Out of experience and travail of the old world arises this light on the affairs of life. Insects stifled by their foe, the snows of winter, are also awakened at this time of the year by breezes of spring and the warm light of the sun upon them.

It is the day of the restoration of all things, on the full tide of satisfaction in the way of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and an opportunity to develop what is in us for glory of our people. In this hope we go forward.

1. This work of ours is on behalf of truth, justice, and life, undertaken at the request of our people, in order to make known their desire for liberty. Let no violence be done to anyone.

2. Let those who follow us know every hour with gladness this same spirit.

3. Let all things be done with singleness of purpose, so that our behavior to the very end may be honorable and upright.

APPENDIX B

THE STATEMENT OF THE FIVE PROVINCE JOINT PRESBYTERY

20 October 1946

Five Province Joint Presbytery

The 2,000 churches and 300,000 Christians, for the preservation of the faith and the progress of the Church, having approved the following five principles for the government of the Church and as rules for Christian living, wish to inform the People's Committee of these principles, hoping for their kind co-operation:

1. Keeping the Sabbath day holy is of the life of the Church, so there should be no attendance at any activities except worship on the Lord's Day.
2. Politics and religion should be distinctly separated.
3. The respect for the Deity in the church building is the proper duty of the church, so that the use of church buildings for purposes other than worship is forbidden.
4. In the event that an acting church minister entering the field of politics, he must resign his office in the church.
5. The church stands for freedom of religion and of assembly.

APPENDIX C

THE STATEMENT OF THE NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

June 1946

The Preparatory Committee of the Christian Association

1. We fully support the Kim Il-sung government.
2. We do not recognize the South Korean regime.
3. The Church vows to be a leader for the *minjung*.
4. Therefore, the Church participates in the election on its own initiative.

APPENDIX D

THE KOREAN SITUATION AND WORLD ORDER

July 13, 1950

Toronto, Canada

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

The conflict in Korea reveals the precarious nature of peace and security in the world today. The World Council of Churches expresses its deep concerns and calls upon its members as a world-wide Christian fellowship to pray for Korea, where guilty and innocent suffer or perish together, and to bear witness to Christ as Lord of all Life and as Prince of Peace.

An act of aggression has been committed. The United Nations Commission in Korea, the most objective witness available, asserts that "all evidence points to a calculated, coordinated attack prepared and launched with secrecy" by North Korean troops.

Armed attack as an instrument of national policy is wrong. We therefore commend the United Nations, an instrument of world order, for its prompt decision to meet this aggression and for authorizing police measure which every member nation should support. At the same time, governments must press individually and through the United Nations for a just settlement by negotiation and conciliation.

The enforced division of a people in Korea or elsewhere is a bitter result of the divided world. It violates fundamental rights and increases the threat to peace. The United Nations has attempted to establish a free, united and independent Korea within community of nations. Every opportunity which may arise from the present tragic situation must be used to gain this end.

The Korean situation need not be the beginning of a general war. We must not regard world-wide conflict as inevitable. Any tendency to irresponsible fatalism should be resisted. We stand for a just peace under the rule of law and must seek peace by expanding justice and by attempting to reconcile contending world powers.

Postwar totalitarianism replies not only on military pressures but also upon a policy of exploiting the distress of the poor, the resentments of subject peoples, discriminations on grounds of race, religion or national origin, the chaos of badly governed nations, and the general disunity between nations. The Korean attack may well be one of a possible series of thrusts at such weak points in world society. Since the world is still filled with these injustices and disorders, a mood of complacency is both wrong and politically dangerous. Overcoming these evils is therefore the most important means for rendering the world morally impregnable to totalitarian infiltration.

Such methods of modern warfare as the use of atomic and bacteriological weapons and obliteration bombing involve force and destruction of life on so terrible a scale as to

imperil the very basis on which law and civilization can exist. It is therefore imperative that they should be banned by international agreement and we welcome every sincere proposal to this end. However, the "Stockholm Appeal", which demands the outlawing of atomic weapons only, without effective international inspection and control, both immediate and continuous, must be regarded as a strategy of propaganda rather than a genuine peace proposal. We must seek peace by cultivating mutual confidence and work for an increasing devotion to common moral principles.

We see the judgments and warnings of God in the things which are now being wrought. As Christians it must be our purpose to "redeem the time because the days are evil." Every temptation to ease and social indifference in so tragic an age, and every tendency towards hysteria amidst the perils about us, must be resisted. We must encourage each other to bear the burdens and face the tasks of our age in the faith of Him who abideth faithful, leaving what lies beyond our power to Him Whose power ruleth and overruleth the actions and passions of men and nations.

APPENDIX E

Dr. W. A. Visser't Hooft,
General Secretary,
World Council of Churches,
17, route de Malagnou,
Genève

Praha,
November 30, 1950

Dear friend,

We are increasingly disturbed by the fact that the present day international tension has driven our ecumenical cooperation within the World Council of Churches to a point where it might become more and more problematic. It is not only we that have such a grave feeling. Statements we have received from various parts of the world are expressing an anxiety of many a member of the church lest the Ecumenical movement hitherto represented, with such a dignity, by the World Council of Churches become an instrument of one international power-group. We are, after earnest deliberations, writing this letter to the Secretariats of the World Council of Churches with a wish that our words help to solve some difficult problems of the Ecumenical movement, and to renew the relations of mutual trust and genuine cooperation.

It was the statement of the Central Committee at Toronto, July 1950, that caused our first serious doubt about the wisdom and prudence of the general attitude of the World Council of Churches to the questions and troubles of international life. The great mission of the World Council of Churches is to stay as a living conscience of nations and countries, to peer, with the eyes of faith, into the depths of world tension, of social diseases and of the war-danger resulting from them. A vast majority of the Christians organized in the World Council of Churches comes from the traditionally Christian countries, proud of their Christian civilization and looking upon themselves as the defenders of Christian spiritual and moral treasures. It is precisely for this fact that they should carefully watch the motives of their own nations international politics. The living prophetic and apostolic word does not permit the church to pass judgment upon the world before she has bowed her head under the judgment of the Lord; she is not permitted to condemn other nations before she has most severely scrutinized the hearts and minds of her own nations. This applies particularly to the Churches of the countries which ostentatiously and officially adhere to the principles of the Christian civilization. The Church has right and obligation to raise her voice in the matters of public and international life. However, she must do it with the wisdom and prudence of a really penitent and to Jesus Christ dedicated conscience. Today, when the peace of the world is at stake, and every self-righteous word can strengthen the aggressive and destructive forces in one's own nation, and prompt a catastrophe, the World Council of Churches should speak in the way that does not pour oil into the fire, and does not encourage one side to a self-righteous "crusade".

What really matters is not only the statement of Toronto in July 1950 but also, and

above all, the mood and the spirit guiding the most important groups within the family of the World Council of Churches. And against this background can be, it seems to us, explained the unfortunate and fateful paragraph of the Toronto statement in which the Central Committee commends the decision of the Security Council to carry out a "Police action" in Korea. It is difficult to understand how a finding of the Korea commission which represents just one power-group within the U.N.O. could have been taken as a ground and justification of such a far-reaching statement. We are really disturbed by the fact that, in one of the most decisive and tragic moments of world history, the World Council of Churches identified itself, self-assuredly, with one side. Instead of challenging the responsibility of all statesmen it condemned, in an out-spoken and specific way, one of two groups. The whole structure of the Toronto statement is, in this respect, remarkable. The condemnation was specific. But when the statement tried to point to the deeper causes of the present conflict it got lost in general moral and political considerations. It did not, with one single word, question the basis of the decision which had broken the unanimity principle of great powers. And yet, it is exactly this principle that is – and in our judgment for a long time shall stay – one of the pillars of the U.N.O. We hear, to be sure, many people in the west criticizing the unanimity principle as, in many ways, uncomfortable, slowing down the procedure of quick decision and action. However, any responsible and realistic person and observer of the world events well knows that the times are abnormal and that we have to suppress our impatience, to deny ourselves and to go, step by step, to the deepest motives of whom we consider the most responsible in the fateful perils of our days. Only in that way can we lay foundations for a new social and international order. If statesmen are not in a position to do it, the Church should stand on the watch. The Toronto statement did not, with one single word, raise criticism of the effort to keep the Democratic China out of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and to solve the problem of Korea without Democratic China and the Soviet Union. Look at the map of Asia and visualize what it means! This procedure of self-will, prestige and power irritates, and will in the future irritate more and more, the Asiatic peoples to resist. The way in which the new China has been treated by the U.N.O. is – in our judgment – one of the causes of the Korean convulsion. Moreover, we have missed any specific warning against the bloody suppression of the peoples of Vietnam and Malaya fighting for their political freedom and social self-determination. All words the Toronto statement said about the exploitation of human misery, about the wrong treatment of some races are not much more than pious phrases – and even they are actually directed against those who fight, in their way, with human misery. The days of the end of June and the beginning of July were mortally serious. It was paramount to speak clearly, specifically and without "respecting persons in judgment".

It was also essential to lay fingers upon the fact that economic expansion tends always, sooner or later, tangibly or intangibly, to military aggression. The Church groups are apt to overlook it since the economic expansion does not look, at first sight, as dangerous as a direct political and military domination. Economic expansion tends always, we respect, to a war peril; consequently, also the economic expansion of Western nations is, at present, a breeding place of military aggression which can be ignored or even denied only by those who are self-complacently sure of their own goodness and the depravity of "the others".

But let us repeat: what really matters is not only the Toronto statement; we have, with uneasiness, read some pronouncements of outstanding representatives of Western Christianity. They draw attention to the spiritual and moral shortcomings of Western Christianity, they call to repentance, and yet, do it in such a way that the penitent Christians have in the end a feeling of self-satisfaction because the real culprit appears “on the other side” of the international front. Confer e.g., the statement of Federal Council of Churches in USA issued to the “World Order Day” of October 22, 1950: “The Churches of Christ in America see in the aggressive imperialism of the police state the most virulent form of man’s disobedience to God. Communist leaders, in seeking world domination, appear to risk the catastrophe of another general war to achieve their ends...” The present social world revolution is treated here in a rather cheap way. However, what is more distressing is the silence about the accumulated wealth in one nation as the dangerous, although hidden, motive of political aggression as well as of stubborn resistance to social revolution which may be the Lord’s judgment upon selfishness and exploitation, pride and self-righteousness of nations.

World Council of Churches must not be made responsible for all pronouncements and actions of its member churches. Our words are rather a warning against many dangers encroaching upon it from the side of the most outstanding church groups, and their theologians. We are not inclined to be anybody’s advocate. We raise, in all humanity, our voice to say our friends and fellow-workers if our distress. We are afraid of the road the World Council of Churches might walk if it yielded to the mood of one side of the present world.

This letter was written by Professor Hromádka as a member of the Central Committee after he discussed the matter with Dr. V. Hájek, Synodical Senior of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. It represents the view of both of them.

With many fraternal greetings,

Faithfully yours,

(Sig.) Josef L. Hromádka

Viktor Hájek

APPENDIX F

THE PLATFORM OF KOREAN CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

1972, Pyongyang

The Central Committee of the Korean Christian Federation

1. With patriotism, we will make efforts for the prosperity of the country upholding the constitution and policy of the Republic government.
2. We will strive to eliminate all sorts of discrimination based on gender, nation, religion, property and class, and to establish a free, equal society founded on the spirit of Christian Charity.
3. The KCF will work to defend the freedom of faith and religious life for the development of Christianity in *Chosun* (North Korea), including work for evangelism, and the rights and demands of the Christians.
4. The KCF will eagerly participate in the nation-wide National United Front through remaining strongly united with the patriotic and democratic parties and social organizations, which work for the prosperity of the nation and love of our fatherland.
5. We will struggle for the complete independence of the fatherland, supporting the independent reunification policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We oppose any moves to foster national separation and division carried out by the imperialists and their agents.
6. We will promote fellowship and solidarity with the Christians and those people all over the world who love justice and peace, and respect the independence of our country. We will contribute to world peace and the welfare of all humanity.

APPENDIX G

PEACE AND THE REUNIFICATION OF KOREA: POLICY STATEMENT

July 1989, Moscow

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

I. In its “statement on Peace and Justice”, the World Council of Churches’ sixth Assembly affirmed that

“The churches today are called to confess anew their faith, and repent for the times when Christians have remained silent in the face of injustice or threats to peace. The biblical vision of peace with justice for all, of wholeness, of unity for all God’s people is not one of several options for the followers of Christ. It is an imperative in our time.”

The yearning for peace, justice and unity converges most poignantly and in a unique manner in the case of Korea. The Korean people have been divided by foreign forces, and remain divided by force and have been submitted to coercive systems of control which perpetuate this division and are justified by it. Opposing conceptions of justice have been created and systemized in Korea, where “security” imposes a continual state of confrontation. A so-called “peace” is maintained at the cost of the largest concentration of military force in the world. Peculiar notions of justice are maintained at the cost of the right of the Korean people to decide their own destiny. Korea remains technically at war, and so long as millions of families remain separated, there can be no claim that justice has been achieved.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ compels Christians and churches in the ecumenical community to engage every effort to overcome division and bring about shalom, a true peace where righteousness and well-being prevail. The biblical passage found in Ephesians 2:14-16 reflects clearly the hopes and promise of the long-suffering Korean people:

“He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh those commandments and ordinances that divided human beings. That he might create in himself one new human being in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end.”

The WCC confesses that it has not always dealt equitably with the Korean question. Mistakes of the past should weigh on the conscience of the ecumenical community and intensify our determination to struggle for peace and the reunification of Korea. As the WCC’s Tozanso consultation on “Peace and Justice in North-East Asia” states,

“The churches are called to provide hope, to witness for peace, justice and unity. They must become a model of dialogue and participation for all who have been affected by the tragedy of division. Christians must surround one another in love, supporting one another in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”

II. Reaffirming the Tozanso principles of ecumenical coordination in these pursuits, the WCC commends the efforts of many churches and ecumenical organizations which have already engaged themselves actively and responsibly in pursuing contacts with Christians in the DPRK, while at the same time maintaining intimate liaison with partner churches and NCKK in the ROK.

The WCC also commends its Korean member churches and the NCKK for their courageous pursuit of human rights and democratization in Korean, as well as their eagerness, despite severe difficulties, to encourage the WCC's contacts with North Korea and to participate in the two historic Glion meetings involving delegations from both North and South. The WCC warmly welcomes the NCKK historic "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace", of February 1988 and the "Message of the International Christian Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea" of April 1988, which constitute important stages in the Tozanso process. It also commends the initiatives taken by women in the Korean churches.

The WCC commends the Korean Christians Federation for its active participation in the ecumenical efforts for peace and the reunification of Korea. It welcomes the new opportunities that the Christian community in the North has for wider ecumenical contacts as well as for public worship.

The WCC pledges to continue to work in the spirit of the Tozanso process to facilitate contacts and to act as a channel of communication between the Christian communities of North and South Korea, as long as this communication cannot be carried on directly. It recognizes the special role of the Christian Conference of Asia and churches in Japan, the USA, the USSR and the People's Republic of China and Korean Christian communities abroad in this regard. Considering the crucial role of the USA in Korea, the work of the NCCCUSA including the policy statement on "Peace and Reunification of Korea" provides a positive example of ecumenical solidarity and cooperation.

The WCC instructs the CCIA to continue to monitor and analyze the situations in both parts of Korea, as well as developments in the region, and in the international community of nations, as far as the Korean issue is concerned. The CCIA is requested to work closely with inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and to engage itself actively in the United Nations for the promotion of peace and the reunification of Korea.

III. In this context, the WCC encourages all member churches and related agencies and councils to initiate or redouble efforts to persuade their respective governments to review their Korean policies and bring them in line with the objectives of peace, justice and reunification. The WCC commends the following elements as priority considerations:

1. The people of Korea should be the ultimate subjects in decisions affecting their future, without outside interference or tutelage. The reunification of Korea should be carried out through a process of democratic participation by all members of the Korean nation.
2. All parties concerned should be called upon to commit themselves to the

principles contained in the joint North-South declaration of 4 July 1972, namely “independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity”. The USA, USSR, Japan and China in particular should be pressed to state clearly their intention to pursue the reunification of Korea as a matter of national policy.

3. The reunification process should respect and recognize the reality of the two existing autonomous systems in the spirit of peaceful co-existence, with the objective of building up one united country. Any proposal implying the permanent division of Korea should be rejected.
4. A radical reduction of military forces, facilities and weapons should be sought on the Korean peninsula in order to eliminate one of the major threats to regional and world peace. The scaling-down of military exercises and the signing of non-aggression declarations could be useful contributions to such force reductions.
5. As contribution to the reduction of tensions and a sign of good faith, the USA should be urged to remove immediately all nuclear weapons from Korean soil, and both the USA and the USSR should be urged also to remove all nuclear weapons aimed at Korea. This would open the way for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Korea.
6. The USA, which along with the DPRK is co-signatory of the 1953 Armistice Agreement, should be encouraged to cooperate in negotiating a peace treaty which could create conditions leading towards the withdrawal of its military forces from the peninsula.
7. A fresh, truly impartial initiative should be launched by the United Nations in an effort to rectify its historical legacy of bias and complicity in Korea's division. Serious consideration should be given to the proposal that the United Nations Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea oversee a mutual troop reduction by North and South Korea.
8. Both North and South Korea should be pressed to find solutions to outstanding humanitarian problems, foremost the tragic situation of millions of separated families. With due recognition that this is an extremely complex problem, open to political misuse and whose solution should not contribute to the perpetuation of division, all parties to the conflict must be urgently reminded of the humane and moral imperative of finding appropriate mechanisms to open many and varied forms of contact between the two parts of the country.

IV. Reaffirming the “Glion Declaration on Peace and the Reunification of Korea”, the WCC supports the decision of churches in both North and South Korea to observe 1995 as the “Year of Jubilee for Unification” and recommends that all WCC member churches and associate ecumenical councils and conferences join in prayer with the Korean churches by observing the Common Day of Prayer.

As one step towards the Jubilee Year, the WCC should explore the possibility of direct reciprocal ecumenical visits between North and South Korea.

The WCC urges all member churches and ecumenical bodies to help Korean Christians in their struggle for peace and the reunification of their people by engaging in activities of solidarity which may include the following elements:

1. Establish or maintain contact with churches and Christians in both parts of Korea.

Such contacts should promote the building of confidence between North and South by providing first-hand information, thus contributing to an atmosphere of trust and reconciliation.

2. In planning contacts and visit to North Korea, it is important to respect the non-denominational character of Christian life there. The Tozanso guidelines, which state that all such visits undertaken in consultation with the WCC and the CCA, should be observed. Visits should be ecumenical both in composition and sponsorship. Visits should be followed up, where possible, with reciprocal invitations to North Korean Christians. Churches in socialist countries carry a special burden in helping North Korean to overcome their isolation.
3. The production and wide dissemination of information about Korea, both within the churches and where possible to the wider public, continues to be essential, given the fact that general knowledge about the Korean situation is grossly inadequate. Such information should include the NCKK "Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace" and the "Glion Declaration on Peace and the Reunification of Korea" as well as the text of this WCC Policy Statement and background paper.
4. In view of the fact that Koreans have been made victims of global Cold War, all efforts to halt the East-West confrontation and arms race will lighten the burden of the Korean dilemma. Churches everywhere must participate in the breaking down of enemy images and the ideological walls which divide both the world and Korea. The overcoming of hatred and hostility is not only a political task but also centrally a task of biblical and theological peace education.
5. Efforts should be made to determine at least the status of separated family members, and explore the possibility of communication. Caution must be exercised that such efforts always remain within the context of reunification for all Korean people. In the words of the "Message" of the International Christian Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea at Inchon, "It is essential that efforts for the reunion of Korean families be responsibly inter-related among Koreans living inside and outside Korea, to ensure that these deeply emotional desires are not exploited for negative political ends."

V. There has been good progress in the struggle for peace and the reunification of Korea during the years since the Tozanso Consultation. It is a credit to the Korean churches and solidarity shown by ecumenical partners that so many positive steps have been successfully taken. But there is yet a long way to go. The immense tragedy of the division of Korea is still little known. The disproportionate human cost paid by the Korean people for the Cold War and geopolitics is little known. The continuing agony of the separation of millions is little known. The potential for escalation of the conflict even to a nuclear conflagration is little known.

It is in highlighting these concerns for world-wide recognition that the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical community can make a unique contribution. The Korean division is in microcosm a symbol of the division of the world. If this wound in the human community can be healed, there would emanate from Korea a hope for all of humankind. We pray that the cross of the Korean people can lead to an Easter for us all.

APPENDIX H

DECLARATION OF THE CHURCHES OF KOREA ON NATIONAL REUNIFICATION AND PEACE

February 29, 1988
The National Council of Churches in Korea

The following statement was unanimously adopted with a standing ovation by the delegates attending the 37th general meeting of the National Council of Churches in Korea held in the Yondong Presbyterian Church, Seoul on 29 February 1988.

We first offer our praise and thanksgiving for the grace and love of God, for sending the Gospel of Christ to the Korean peninsula, making it possible for us to know of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and for granting us salvation and adoption as children of God. We offer our thanks also for the work of the Holy Spirit in the history of Korea among all the sisters and brothers of the community of faith, uniting the whole church in service to the mission of the liberation and salvation of our people. We confess the one God, Creator of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), and we believe that all people are invited to become children of God (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26, 4:7).

Jesus Christ came to this land as the "Servant of Peace" (Ephesians 2:13-19), to proclaim within division, conflict and oppression God's Kingdom of peace, reconciliation and liberation (Luke 4:18; John 14:27). Jesus Christ suffered, died upon the Cross, was buried, and rose in the Resurrection to reconcile humanity to God, to overcome divisions and conflicts, and to liberate all people and make them one (Acts 10:36-40). Jesus Christ blessed the peacemakers and called them the children of God (Matthew 5:9). We believe that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the eschatological future of history, will make us one, and enable us to become partners in God's mission (John 14:18-21; 16:13-14; 17:11).

We believe that all of us who are members of the churches of Korea have been called to labor as apostles of peace (Colossians 3:15). God has commanded the Korean churches to undertake the mission of overcoming today's harsh reality of our one people divided north and south in confrontation, and we are thus obligated to work for the realization of unification and peace (Matthew 5:23-24).

With this confession of our faith as a foundation, the National Council of Churches in Korea hereby declares its position on peace and the reunification of our nation before the churches of Korea and the world ecumenical community, at the same time directing an appeal in the spirit of prayer to all our Korean compatriots and to the leaders of government in both north and south.

The Mission Tradition of the Korean Churches for Justice and Peace

The Protestant churches of Korea have proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this land for more than a century, and have committed many errors before the people of

Korea during that time, yet these same churches, in their proclamation of the Kingdom of God, have devoted great efforts toward realizing the liberation and independence which have been the great hope of the Korean people. Our forebears in the faith received the Holy Spirit, and following the command of the Scriptures (Luke 4:18-19), they preached the Gospel to the poor, gave hope of liberty and independence to our oppressed people, and as they shared the suffering of the Korean people in their slavery under Japanese imperial rule, they resolutely pursued the mission of national liberation and independence.

The Christians of Korea could not, however, find the true meaning of peace within any ease or security they might be granted so long as they remained bowed like slaves in submission. Peace must be the fruit of justice (Isaiah 32:17), and a peace which did not include national independence or humane liberty could only be a false peace (Jeremiah 6:13-14). The peace movement of the Korean churches during Japanese imperial colonial rule was necessarily a movement for national independence which shared in the pain of our enslaved people, while preaching faith and the Kingdom of God inevitably implied the realization of those realities within history through the movement for national liberation.

The Christians of Korea marched in the forefront of March First Independence Movement of 1919, resisted the Japanese imperial policy of annihilating Korean culture, and shed martyrs' blood in defiance of the Japanese deification of nationalism in the enforcement of Shinto worship.

After Korea was divided in 1945, the Christians of South Korea helped minister to the needs of those victimized by the national separation, especially the suffering refugees, orphans, and others dislocated by war. The churches welcomed into their midst those from the north separated from their families or churches, offering them love and support.

As the national division hardened into a fixed reality, dictatorial military regimes emerged which repressed human rights in the name of security, and oppressed laborers and farmers under the logic of economic growth. The churches of Korea mounted resistance to such oppression through a faith which sought justice and peace. The Korean churches' movement in behalf of human rights and democratization in the 1970's and 1980's has thus been the direct heir to the enduring tradition of a mission movement for justice and peace.

The Reality of a Divided People

The division of the Korean peninsula is a sinful result of the present world political structure and existing ideological systems. The Korean nation has been forced to suffer as a sacrificial lamb at the hands of the world's superpowers as they pursue their involved struggles within their military and ideological confrontations.

The Korean people were liberated from their slavery under Japanese imperial colonial rule in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, but were immediately bound in the new fetters of division into north and south. The line of demarcation established in the

name of disarming the aggressive Japanese imperial forces became fixed due to the Cold War structure between the Soviet Union and the United States. The northern and southern parts of Korea separately established different governments, and for over 40 years their mutual military, political and ideological conflicts and antagonisms have become ever more severe.

The Korean Conflict which began on June 25, 1950 brought about a tragic internecine war on the peninsula which intensified the international conflict. More tonnage in bombs was dropped on Korea than on the whole of Europe in the Second World War, reducing the entire peninsula to ashes. The Korean War resulted in 220,000 South Korean, over 600,000 north Korean, 1,000,000 Chinese, 140,000 American, and over 16,000 other United Nations military casualties, and if the number who died from disease during the war is included, some 2,500,000 soldiers' lives were sacrificed. If the 500,000 south Korean and 3,000,000 north Korean civilian casualties are added to that, the blood of six million persons was spilled upon the earth of this land (statistics from the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1970 edition). In addition, three million refugees and ten million separated family members remained after this conflict.

In the time both preceding and following the Korean Conflict, the Christians of north Korea have endured suffering and death in their confrontation with the North Korean communist regime, leading hundreds of thousands of Christians from the north to leave their home communities and churches to endure the hardships of refugee life in their flight to the south. During the War a considerable number of South Korean Christians were kidnapped or subjected to cruel, tragic executions. Communist sympathizers became victims of ideological warfare and were ostracized from society, labeled as "traitors."

The Korean peninsula, which had been reduced to ashes in war, continued to live entangled in the international political conflict of the east-west Cold War structure, and as a result there was a steady escalation between the north and south in military competition, mutual distrust, reciprocal vilification and hostility. Peace on the peninsula was destroyed, and it became generally accepted that national reconciliation would be impossible for the Korean people.

The demarcation begun as an "armistice line" following the signing of the Armistice Agreement in 1953 soon hardened into a permanently unchangeable "border of division." As this wall of separation loomed ever higher, the two systems in north and south continued to become ever more aggressively hostile within this separation and confrontation. The military rivalry between north and south accelerated, until the state of armed readiness stood at 840,000 troops in the north, with 600,000 in the south, or nearly 1,500,000 troops on the peninsula. The nuclear weapons deployed here or targeted upon the peninsula alone constitute a destructive force more than sufficient to annihilate completely the people of Korea.

The prolongation of this division has led to abuses of human rights in both systems in the name of security and ideology, thus we have seen the repression of the freedoms of speech, press, assembly and association. The complete suspension by both sides of

postal service, travel, visitation and all other communication has resulted in the ironic situation of the two sections of one small land area becoming the two most distant and different countries on earth. The educational systems and propaganda of north and south share in mutual vilification, each setting the two systems in competition in order to weaken and destroy the other, always perceived as the most hated enemy. As a result the people of both north and south are not only kept in ignorance about the life and culture of their Korean compatriots, but have been trained to believe they must not know about one another. Thus both systems teach their people to believe that their blood brothers and sisters are the enemy most to be feared.

Dialogue between north and south was begun in 1972, and the July 4th Joint Communiqué of that year raised hopes that this would become an opening leading to further dialogue, cooperation and exchange. Red Cross talks between north and south were reopened in 1985, and although some separated families were able to visit their home areas, the numbers involved were extremely limited, and as yet dialogue and negotiations remain completely at a standstill.

As late as the early 1980's the Christians of South Korea were not able so much as to verify the existence of a church or Christian believers in the north. The deep-seated mistrust and enmity toward the communist regime engendered during the hardening of the state of division continued unabated, and Christians remained blindly attached to a rigid anti-Communist ideology.

A Confession of the Sin of Hatred within Division

As we Christians of Korea publish this declaration for peace and reunification, we confess before God and our people that we have sinned; we have long harbored a deep hatred and hostility toward the other side within the structure of division.

1. The division of the Korean people has been the result of the structural evil reflected in the east-west confrontation of the world's superpowers in their Cold War system, and this reality has also been the root cause of the structural evil present within the societies of both north and South Korea. Within this state of division we have been guilty of the sin of violating God's commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-40)

Because of the division of our homeland, we have hated, deceived and murdered our blood compatriots, and have compounded this sin through political and ideological justification. Division has led to war, yet we Christians have committed the sin of endorsing the reinforcement of troops and further rearmament with the newest and most powerful weapons in the name of preventing another war (Psalms 33:16-20; 44:6-7).

Through this process the Korean peninsula has become dependent upon outside powers not only militarily, but also in the political, economic and other spheres, and has been incorporated into and subjugated under the east-west Cold War structure. We Christians confess to having sinned during the course of this subjugation by abandoning our sense

of national pride and betraying our people through forfeiting our spirit of national independence (Romans 9:3).

2. We confess that during the course of our national division the churches of Korea have not only remained silent and repeatedly ignored the ongoing movement for the autonomous reunification of our people, but have further sinned by trying to justify the division. The Christians of both north and south have made absolute idols of the ideologies imposed by their respective systems. This is a betrayal of the ultimate sovereignty of God (Exodus 20:3-5), and is a sin, for the church must obey the will of God rather than the will of political regimes (Acts 4:19).

We confess that the Christians of the south especially have sinned by making a virtual religious idol out of anti-communist ideology and have thus not been content merely to treat the communist regime in the north as the enemy, but have gone further and damned our northern compatriots and others whose ideology differs from our own (John 13:14-15; 4:20-21). Not only does this sin violate the commandment, it has also become the sin of indifference toward those neighbors who have suffered and continue to suffer because of our national division. It is furthermore the sin of failure to ameliorate their suffering through the love of Christ (John 13:17).

The Basic Principles of the Churches of Korea for National Reunification

We Christians must practice the Gospel of peace and reconciliation so that the just and peaceful Kingdom of God may come (Ephesians 2:14-17), and to bring this about we must share in the suffering of our people. Such participation is the only way our nation's reconciliation and reunification can be realized, thus concern and efforts in behalf of reunification are a matter of faith for us. By overcoming the division which threatens the life of the Korean people and endangers world peace, reunification becomes the way leading us from conflict and confrontation to reconciliation and coexistence, and finally to one peaceful community for our people.

The National Council of Churches in Korea has, through a series of consultations beginning in 1984, established the following basic principles for the churches as we look toward national reunification.

The National council of Churches in Korea affirms the three broad principles articulated in the first north-south negotiated Joint Communiqué of July 4, 1972 namely (1) independence, (2) peace, and (3) a national unity transcending differences in ideas, ideologies and systems, and believes that these should provide the guiding spirit informing our nation's reconciliation and reunification. In addition, we Christians believe that the following two further principles should also be honored in all dialogue, negotiation, and action for reunification.

1. Reunification must bring about not only the common good and benefit of the people and the nation, it must also provide the maximum protection of human liberty and dignity. Since the people and the nation both exist to protect human freedom and welfare, while ideologies and systems also exist to serve humanity, primary

consideration must always be given to humanitarian concerns and humane measures, and these must never be withheld by any government.

2. In every step of the formulation of proposals for reunification the full democratic participation of all members of society must be guaranteed. Most importantly, participation must be assured for the *minjung* (common people), who have not only suffered the most in the situation of division, but have been continuously alienated and excluded from the decision-making processes of society, despite their constituting the majority of the population.

Proposals of the Churches of Korea to the Governments of North and South

Following the above principles, the National Council of Churches in Korea urges the responsible authorities in the governments of both north and south to exert their utmost efforts to enable dialogue so that the following may be accomplished as soon as possible.

1. For the healing of the wounds caused by division

- a. First of all, those separated families who have suffered in so many ways for over 40 years as victims of the division must be reunited and allowed to live together, and they must be guaranteed the right to move freely and locate wherever they choose to live.
- b. Even before reunification is achieved, everyone living in separation from family members in north or south must be allowed to visit freely their relatives and home areas at definite times on an annual basis, perhaps at *Chusok* (the Korean autumn harvest festival) or some other holiday season.
- c. The unjust social discrimination which still prevails against some persons because of their momentary errors or the past records of their family or relatives, problems inevitably arising during the solidifying of the national division, must be abolished at once.

2. For the promotion of the people's genuine participation in overcoming the division

- a. Neither government, north or south, has the right to exercise a monopoly on information about the other nor to monopolize the discussion on reunification. Freedom of speech must be guaranteed so that the citizens of both north and south may participate freely in the discussion for establishing a policy of reunification, while there must be realistic, institutional guarantees of the activities of civilian organizations in the research and discussion of the reunification issue.
- b. Both North and South Korea must permit maximum freedom for people who oppose either system or ideology to criticize freely according to their conscience and faith, and both must abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations' International Human Rights Covenants.

3. For a wider national unity of the Korean people transcending differences in ideas, ideologies and systems

If Korea is to realize true national sovereignty, the people of both north and south will have to transcend their differences in ideas, ideologies and systems, and both populations must clearly confirm to their own satisfaction that they are one people sharing a common fate. Based upon such a mutual acknowledgment North and South Korea must together build a firm trust in one another. It follows that those things which enable mutual trust constitute the basic starting point for all efforts directed toward reunification. To foster such trust those factors which give rise to mistrust and hostility must be eliminated, while mutual exchanges should be expanded, both to broaden mutual understanding and to restore rapidly our sense of common ethnic identity. Because all such measures aimed at fostering trust are the most essential condition for overcoming division, even if progress is not made toward discussion between the official representatives of the two governments and agreements are not forthcoming, there must also be non-governmental channels through which citizens themselves may seek progress.

a. Both North and South Korea must terminate their mutual hostility and aggressive inclinations, and must eliminate the exclusivism which leads to the slandering and vilification of one other. In addition, each must modify its extreme, emotional censure of the other's differing ideology and system and offer in its place constructive criticism.

b. To promote mutual understanding north and south must each have unprejudiced, objective information about the other, so exchanges, visits and communications must be opened.

c. In order to restore the sense of common national identity, north-south exchanges and joint research should be promoted in such areas as language, history, geography, biology, and natural resources; while exchanges should take place in other areas such as culture, the arts, religion and sports.

4. For reducing tensions and promoting peace between North and South Korea

a. In order to prevent war and reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula it is necessary to conclude a peace treaty and terminate the existing state of war. To this end it is urgent that the governments of north and south Korea, the United States, china, and others who participated in the Korean Conflict open negotiations designed to replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty which includes a non-aggression pact.

b. At such time that a peace treaty is concluded, a verifiable state of mutual trust is restored between north and south Korea, and there are international guarantees of the peace and security of the entire Korean peninsula, then United States troops should be withdrawn and the United Nations Command in Korea should be dissolved.

c. The excessive military rivalry between north and south Korea is the greatest obstacle to peaceful reunification and is moreover inimical to economic progress.

Therefore a parallel reduction in military strength must follow mutual negotiations between north and south, and the reductions in military preparations must be reflected in a greater commitment to industrial production for peace.

d. Nuclear weapons must never be used under any circumstances, and as a matter of principle North and South Korea must unite to prevent any possibility of their use on the Korean peninsula. All nuclear weapons deployed on the peninsula or targeted in its direction must be removed.

5. For the realization of national independence

a. It is imperative that the Korean people protect their independence and self-determination, so there must be no outside interference or dependency upon neighboring nations or the superpowers in negotiations, conferences, of international agreements between North and South Korea.

b. Both North and South Korea must either revise or abrogate all diplomatic agreements and treaties which undermine rather than promote the life and interests of the Korean people. North and south Korea must also reach mutual agreement in regard to all international alliances and associations, examining them to make certain that the common good of all Koreans is their primary objective.

The Task of the Churches of Korea for Peace and Reunification

We believe that Jesus Christ is the "Lord of Peace" (Colossians 1:20), and that God's mission of salvation and liberation for humankind is being realized also within societies which have ideas and systems which differ from our own. Even though the confessions of faith and outward forms of the churches of Christians living in other societies may differ from ours, we believe that they are united in the one God and one Lord and are thereby joined with us as members of the one Body (I Corinthians 12:12-26).

In an astonishing way, the world ecumenical community has, within the last few years, greatly strengthened our conviction of this reality by bringing information about our sisters and brothers who live in North Korea and even enabling us to have direct contact with them.

Once again we offer our thanks for God's continuing work of liberation in the history of the Korean peninsula, and pray for God's grace and blessing upon our sisters and brothers who steadfastly endure in their faith even under difficult circumstances.

With this confession as the basis, the National council of Churches in Korea, in order to fulfill its mission calling for peace and reconciliation, and in response to the historic summons to overcome the division of our people through sharing the suffering it has caused, in a spirit of repentance and prayer plans to launch the following movement for a Jubilee Year for Peace and Reunification.

1. The National Council of Churches in Korea proclaims the year 1995 to be the "Jubilee Year for Peace and Reunification."

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

The "jubilee year" is the fiftieth year following the completion of a 49 year cycle of seven sabbatical years (Leviticus 25:8-10). The jubilee year is a "year of liberation." The proclamation of the jubilee year is an act of God's people which reveals their unshaking trust in God's sovereignty over history and their faithfulness in keeping God's sovereignty over history and their faithfulness in keeping God's covenant. The jubilee year is a time during which the covenant community of unity and peace is restored through the establishing of shalom based upon God's justice. This is seen in the liberation of the enslaved through the overcoming of all social and economic conflicts resulting from internal or external repression and absolutist power: indebtedness is forgiven, sold land is restored to its original tillers, and seized homes are returned to their original inhabitants (Leviticus 25:11-55).

The Korean churches proclaim 1995, the fiftieth year of our Liberation, as a Jubilee Year. This expresses our belief that the God who rules all history has been present within these fifty years of our history, and proclaims our firm resolution to bring about the restoration of the covenanted community of peace in the history of the Korean peninsula today. As we march forward with high aspirations toward this Jubilee Year, we should anticipate a revitalizing of our faith in the sovereign God who works within the history of our people, together with a renewing of our commitment to God's mission calling.

2. As a part of the "Great March toward the Jubilee Year" the Korean churches will carry forward a vigorous church renewal movement aimed toward peace and reunification.

a. In order to fulfill their mission responsibility for peace and reunification the Korean churches need to overcome their local self-centeredness and their preoccupation with ecclesiastical power, while greatly strengthening mission cooperation for church unity.

b. As they proclaim the Jubilee Year the churches of Korea must reform those internal structures which have restricted broad participation. Thus the churches must resolutely open and expedite a full participation in lay mission activity which will include women and youth.

c. In order to bring about economic and social justice in our society, the churches of Korea must continue to perform a prophetic role.

3. As a part of the proclamation of the Jubilee Year the churches of Korea, as a community of faith committed to the realization of peace and reunification, will carry out a broad program of education for peace and reunification.

a. The churches of Korea will widely disseminate Biblical and theological peace studies and peace education materials, and will promote research and the exchange of information among the various theological and Christian education institutions.

b. To increase concern about national reunification the Korean churches will promote reunification education that heightens awareness of the historical, social and theological validity of national reunification. A deepened perception of the structure and history of national division will be sought, together with a deeper understanding of the theological dimensions of the state of division.

c. Building upon theological reflection and steadfast commitment to the Christian faith, the Korean churches will seek a broader scientific understanding of communist ideology, and will promote the research and education on ideology required for substantial conceptual dialogue.

4. Through the proclamation of the Jubilee Year festival and the creation of a liturgy for peace and reunification, the Korean churches will seek to bring about a renewal of faith, true reconciliation, and unity.

a. The churches of Korea will establish a "Sunday of Prayer for Peace and Reunification" to observe the Jubilee Year, and will develop a form of worship for this purpose. Included will be prayers for reunification, a confession of sin within division, a call to commitment for reunification, prayers of intercession for the victims of division and our divided people, a confession of faith for national reconciliation, the proclamation of the Word (proclaiming the Jubilee Year), hymns and poetry, and a sacrament for peace and reconciliation.

b. Until the time when direct communication between the churches of north and south becomes possible, we will seek the cooperation of the world churches to enable the joint proclamation in both north and south of the Jubilee Year, will promote the common observance of the "Sunday of Prayer for Peace and Reunification," and will seek the joint preparation and use of "prayers for peace and reunification."

c. With the cooperation of the world churches, the Korean churches will search for ways to confirm the status of separated family members, explore the possibility of exchanging letters, and develop a movement for searching out relatives, church members and friends separated north from south.

5. The Korean churches will work unceasingly to build a movement for solidarity in the cause of peace and reunification.

a. The proclamation of the Jubilee Year for Peace and Reunification, proceeding from the churches' confession of faith, will be developed as a continuously widening

"solidarity movement for peace and reunification." This must be a comprehensive movement, embracing all the churches on the local, denominational, and ecumenical levels. The National Council of Churches in Korea especially will exert efforts to include not only its member churches, but also non-member denominations and the Roman Catholic Church in this movement for confessional action and practice seeking peace and reunification.

b. As the mission calling to peace and reunification is the universal task of all Christians on the Korean peninsula, the churches of South Korea will pray for the faith and life of the Christian community in the north, and will work for north-south exchanges between our churches.

c. Because peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula are crucial to peace not only in Northeast Asia but throughout the world, the Korean churches will seek to consult closely and to develop movements for solidarity with the churches of the four powers in the region, the United States, the Soviet Union, China and Japan, as well as with churches throughout the world.

d. The churches of Korea will expand and deepen dialogue with other religious groups and movements, and through joint research and cooperative activity will seek to promote greater solidarity for peace and the reunification of this nation.

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